

**A Theological Appraisal of the Doctrine that Jesus Died Spiritually, as Taught
by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland**

William P. Atkinson

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Declaration

I declare that:

- (a) this thesis has been composed by myself;
- (b) the work is my own;
- (c) the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:

William P. Atkinson

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Abstract

This thesis appraises the doctrine that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ (JDS), as taught by E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth E. Hagin and Kenneth Copeland: important research because of the influence of these men and their teaching, not least on Pentecostalism. JDS teaching originated with Kenyon, was introduced to the Word-faith movement by Hagin, and continues to be offered by Copeland. However, it has been the subject of much criticism.

The appraisal conducted in this project is primarily theological. Aspects of JDS teaching are considered in the light of both the Christian scriptures and the church’s great thinkers. Theological investigation into Kenyon’s immediate sources is also conducted. The research finds that the alleged ‘spiritual death’ of Christ incorporates three major elements: in this ‘death’, Jesus was separated from God; partook of a sinful, satanic nature; and was Satan’s prey. Jesus had to die thus to atone for human sin.

The appraisal observes that criticism of JDS teaching offered so far is partially inaccurate. In particular, the alleged ‘spiritualisation’ of Christ’s death does not owe its origin to New Thought or Christian Science, as claimed, but is developed by Kenyon from seeds lying within Higher Life and Faith Cure circles. However, study of the three main aspects of JDS teaching confirms earlier research that it often misrepresents the Christian scriptures. Furthermore, it departs significantly from historic Christian formulations. This particularly applies to the claim that Christ partook of Satan’s nature.

The project concludes that JDS teaching is not readily compatible with the traditional trinitarianism, incarnationism and substitutionary atonement to which it claims to adhere. Adoption of JDS teaching by Pentecostalism would be damaging in these doctrinal respects, and thus draw the latter away from its moorings in traditional Christianity. Pentecostalism is advised to reject the bulk of this teaching.

Preface

I am a minister in the Elim Pentecostal Church and for ten years was part of the ministry team at Kensington Temple, an Elim church in London. There I heard visiting speakers including Benny Hinn, Ray McCauley, Morris Cerullo, John Avanzini, and others who were identified with the Word-Faith movement. There too I first heard preached the belief that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ (JDS). While at Kensington Temple I was also introduced for the first time to the critique of the Word-faith movement offered by Dan McConnell. Although I was impressed by his research, I was convinced neither by his association of E. W. Kenyon with New Thought, nor by his seemingly reductionist counter-arguments to JDS teaching.

My interest in JDS teaching has remained with me for the intervening years, since 1997 spent teaching at Regents Theological College. The opportunity arose to research the doctrine at doctoral level, and I am grateful to the University of Edinburgh for accepting me as a student. I have thoroughly enjoyed the research, and have learned a great amount.

Recognising that the Word-faith movement has much in common with Pentecostals, I felt potentially well placed to conduct this research. I considered it from my own Pentecostal perspective, though with a greater interest in historical theology than would perhaps be common in my denomination. I expected to find more of value in JDS teaching than its critics allow, and so was surprised to discover the extent to which I disagree with JDS teaching. It is of some value in preventing the ‘sanitising’ of the horrors of Christ’s crucifixion that can so easily bedevil Christianity. However, one does not need JDS teaching for protection against this sanitisation. More significant than its value for Pentecostals are its dangers. In particular, it misrepresents the incarnation, the part Satan played in the crucifixion, and the time between cross and resurrection. Thereby, it does not furnish Pentecostals with a helpful contribution to understanding how Christ achieved salvation for humanity.

William Atkinson.

Abbreviations

AB	The Anchor Bible
<i>ANF</i>	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>CD</i>	<i>Church Dogmatics</i>
Edn	Edition
ET	English Translation
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
INTC	The IVP New Testament Commentary Series
JDS	Jesus 'died spiritually'
IVP	Inter-Varsity Press
<i>JEPTA</i>	<i>The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
KJV	King James Version
<i>LW</i>	<i>Luther's Works</i>
NCBC	The New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NKJV	New King James Version
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
ORU	Oral Roberts University
pb	paperback
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
UK	United Kingdom
US(A)	United States (of America) (standard abbreviations of US states are used in bibliographical information)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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I am most grateful for the contributions of others who have helped me in the development of this project. My supervisors in the University of Edinburgh School of Divinity, Professors David Fergusson and Larry Hurtado, have made innumerable suggestions, large and small, all of which are much appreciated. Kenyon researchers Geir Lie, Jim McIntyre and Dale Simmons have answered my various questions with kindness and patience. Robert Forrest brought certain early church sources to my attention.

I also want to thank members of the research community at Regents Theological College, Nantwich. Various people there have made helpful suggestions in response to papers that I have given, including particularly Keith Warrington, Neil Hudson, Julian Ward, and Martin Clay.

Lastly, I want to thank my wife Alison for her wonderful patience in reading this project as it has developed.

Introduction

This project is an appraisal of the doctrine that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ (JDS), as taught by E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth E. Hagin and Kenneth Copeland. The research ascertains what these authors teach about the alleged ‘spiritual death’ of Jesus, and assesses whether there is value for Christianity in these ideas. JDS teaching has been widely regarded by its reviewers as ‘heretical’, but the satisfactoriness of this critique requires detailed investigation, which it has hardly yet received. The hypothesis tested by the research is that JDS doctrine is more congruent with biblical and historic Christian affirmations about the death of Christ than its detractors suggest. The research concludes that, while this hypothesis is to a limited extent true, nevertheless there is much in JDS teaching of which Christians may be rightly wary.

The research is important for several reasons. First, it contributes to scholarly debate into the lives and teaching both of E. W. Kenyon and of the Word-faith movement, of which Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland are major proponents. Research of this type is necessary, because Word-faith doctrines are widely influential (see §1.2.4) and often in distinct contrast to ideas traditionally held by Christians. To date, little detailed research into either Kenyon or the Word-faith movement has occurred. Dale Simmons’ doctoral work lays an important foundation for Kenyon research,¹ and James Kinnebrew’s unpublished thesis is an example of doctoral research into one aspect of the Word-faith movement’s teaching and practice: positive confession.² However, most of the movement’s distinctive ideas and practices have so far only been subjected to the scrutiny of evangelical (often Pentecostal/charismatic) Christians writing for a popular market and doing so in far less detail than doctoral research demands.³ Secondly, another reason why this research into JDS teaching is worthwhile is that some of the best known responses to the teaching have been

¹ Dale H. Simmons, *E. W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997).

² James M. Kinnebrew, *The Charismatic Doctrine of Positive Confession: A Historical, Exegetical, and Theological Critique* (Unpublished Th.D. thesis, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988).

³ Single chapters or sections on JDS teaching occur in such works as: Robert M. Bowman, Jr, *The Word-Faith Controversy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001); Andrew Brandon, *Health & Wealth* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1987); Dan McConnell, *The Promise of Health and Wealth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990); Hank Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis* (Milton Keynes: Nelson Word Ltd: UK edn, 1995 [1993]); Andrew Perriman (ed.), *Faith, Health & Prosperity* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003).

markedly polemical, and a sense is thereby created that research which listens respectfully to both sides of the debate might reach rather different conclusions from the more robustly polemical contributions. Thirdly, research conducted so far has exhibited certain methodological insufficiencies or weaknesses, most noticeable of which is a marked lack of interaction with historical Christian theology. This lack will be rectified in the present work (see §2.6). Fourthly, the influence of the Word-faith movement has been greatest among Pentecostal and charismatic Christians, for the Word-faith movement sits within, or ‘beyond’, the Pentecostal end of the evangelical spectrum (see §§1.2.2-1.2.3). Therefore research conducted from a Pentecostal viewpoint, as this is, can be sensitive to those doctrinal distinctives that are common to Pentecostalism, and those which are genuinely unique to JDS teaching. Finally, this research is important because questions surrounding the cross of Christ are, by definition, ‘crucial’ to Christianity, and deserve careful study by or on behalf of professing Christians.

JDS doctrine will be studied in the forms taught by E. W. Kenyon, widely recognised as its progenitor, Kenneth E. Hagin, widely regarded as the founder of the Word-faith movement, and Kenneth Copeland, widely seen as the main living proponent of the Word-faith movement and of JDS doctrine. In fact, JDS doctrine is taught fairly widely throughout the Word-faith movement, but with some variety (see §§1.4.5-1.4.8). A full study of every nuance of JDS teaching as it emanates from each exponent of the Word-faith movement would not be possible within the word limit of this thesis. Therefore some selection is imperative. The three authors have been chosen for this project because of their renown and significance, because of the relative uniformity of the versions of JDS teaching that they espouse, and because they teach JDS doctrine in some of its most distinct forms. Most other expressions of the doctrine are ‘toned down’ versions, that have accommodated certain aspects of JDS teaching with more traditional ideas about Christ’s death.

This project lies within the field of theology, drawing on biblical and historic sources to inform one detailed subsection of systematic theology (see §2.3). It self-consciously furthers an already existing debate. As such, it respects and largely

remains confined to the assumptions and methods underlying the debate. The most obvious of these is the place given to biblical teaching, and the way(s) it is understood (see §2.4). This thesis is written from the Pentecostal perspective of its author, who is a minister within the Elim Pentecostal Church. In common with many protestant groups, Pentecostal churches including Elim regard the Christian scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the finally authoritative canon against which any putatively Christian idea is to be gauged.⁴ This thesis will follow suit. Each chapter will contain a section in which the aspect of JDS doctrine under examination will be compared to relevant biblical texts. Beyond that, the project will consider aspects of historical theology: specifically, what Kenyon's immediate theological sources may have been (see §2.5), and what major thinkers have written on the subjects under review (see §2.6). As a theological project, it will not primarily be interested in a Christian group as an exercise in religious studies. Therefore, no sustained attempt will be made to define or delineate the Word-faith movement, which is an informal and amorphous group (see §1.2.3).

The report which follows is organised into seven chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 are preliminary. Chapter 1 introduces the context for further study, by surveying the Word-faith movement, the authors under review, JDS teaching, and the criticisms of JDS teaching that have so far been offered. Chapter 2 sets out the scope, criteria and methods that this project utilises. Chapters 3 to 6 consider JDS teaching in detail. Chapter 3 reviews the claims that Jesus 'died spiritually', and that he had to do this in order to save humanity from sin and sickness. Thereafter, chapters 4, 5, and 6 discuss three interlocking aspects of the teaching: the 'spiritual death' of Jesus as separation from God, as partaking in a sinful, satanic nature, and as becoming Satan's prey. Finally, chapter 7 summarises the research findings and assesses their implications.

⁴ The first of twelve 'Fundamental Truths' of the Elim Church reads: "THE BIBLE: We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct." (Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance, *The Constitution of the Elim Pentecostal Church* [Cheltenham: The Elim Pentecostal Church, 2000], p.1). For other representative Pentecostal statements of belief, see Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (London: SCM, 1972), pp.513-521.

Each of chapters 1 to 6 presents its own conclusions in a final section, organised into three subsections: 'summary'; 'implications'; and 'key observations'. The final subsections, 'key observations', do not seek to summarise or reflect upon the findings of each whole chapter. Instead, especially for the sake of those familiar with JDS teaching and its surrounding debate, they emphasise ways in which this thesis advances that debate, and thus offers an original contribution to research into JDS doctrine.

1. The JDS debate and debaters

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to serve three main purposes. First, it develops a rationale, already briefly mentioned in the introduction, for the importance of this research, especially for Pentecostalism, by demonstrating that JDS teaching's theological 'home', the Word-faith movement, is influential, that the JDS teachers under review are themselves significant to the Word-faith movement, that JDS teaching is important to these teachers, and that it needs to be considered by Pentecostals because of the potential influence of JDS teaching on Pentecostalism. The second aim of this chapter is perform some 'personal introductions'. Brief biographical information about the three JDS teachers under review, E. W. Kenyon, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, will be offered. Thereafter, significant critics of JDS teaching will also be introduced, as will the theological and sociological clusters into which they can be grouped. The third aim of this chapter is to introduce themes. JDS teaching and its theological context itself will be briefly presented, though of course later chapters of the thesis will offer far greater detail than that given here. Criticisms of JDS teaching will also begin to emerge.

In order to achieve these aims, the chapter consists of eight sections. First, §1.2 considers the ecclesiastical context of the teaching by describing that section of Christianity where it flourishes most: the Word-faith movement. It considers the Word-faith movement as a whole, its growing influence and its relationship with Pentecostalism. Next, §1.3 introduces the three JDS proponents whose teaching on the subject is reviewed in this research. Their relationship both with the Word-faith movement and with JDS doctrine is examined. Thereafter, §1.4 offers a preliminary survey of JDS teaching itself, placing it in its theological context, and mentioning the variety that exists between the versions of the three teachers, and among other JDS teachers. Later sections consider the contributions to the debate about JDS teaching from those who do not hold to it: §1.5 introduces significant categories of debater; §§1.6 to 1.8 consider major debaters individually, in three groups under the headings 'growing opposition', 'dissenting voices' and 'mediating positions'. Finally, §1.9

concludes the chapter by summarising its findings and considering its implications for the rest of the thesis.

At this point, ‘JDS teaching’ requires definition. For the purposes of this thesis, it is any teaching that fulfils two criteria. First, it states in so many words that Jesus ‘died spiritually’, refers to the ‘spiritual death’ of Christ, or uses precisely equivalent terminology. Secondly, it uses such phrases in accounts of salvation history in general and Christ’s death in particular that bear some sustained resemblance to at least some of the distinctive teaching of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland. Thus, for instance, the exposition by Billy Graham (1918-) of Christ’s death is not regarded as JDS teaching on account of his writing the “awful suffering of Jesus Christ was His spiritual death”,¹ because Graham’s overall teaching on the subject does² not reflect Kenyon’s, Hagin’s or Copeland’s distinctives. It must be conceded that this working definition creates two potential difficulties. The first is that, in characterising Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland as JDS teachers, it creates a definition based on circular reasoning. This turns out not to be problematic, however, for these three all share in a clearly distinct view of Christ’s death, and have already been designated JDS teachers by a variety of commentators. The second potential difficulty is that an arbitrary distinction between ‘JDS teaching’ and ‘not JDS teaching’ is created, whereas in fact a spectrum of perspectives is discernible, in which different authors offer increasingly diluted versions, until hardly any ‘JDS’ element is to be seen. As the primary focus of this project is on just three teachers, whose versions of JDS teaching are not dilute, this arbitrariness is also not in practice problematic.

1.2 The Word-faith movement

This section will present a brief overview of the movement’s origins (§1.2.1), beliefs (§1.2.2), organisation (§1.2.3) and influence (§1.2.4).

¹ Billy Graham, *Peace With God* (Kingswood, Surrey: The World’s Work, 1954), p.83.

² Throughout the thesis, except where the context demands, the present tense is used of authors known to be alive at the time of writing, the past tense of those already dead, and the present tense when both living and dead authors are referred to.

1.2.1 Origins

The Word-faith movement³ is the theological ‘home’ of JDS teaching. It is a loose affiliation⁴ of churches, informal fellowships and individuals which started in the United States of America, and has now spread to several continents. The movement has a number of identifiable roots. One is Pentecostalism. Another is the healing ‘revival’ in the United States after World War Two. A third important root is the teaching of a certain E. W. Kenyon (1867-1948). Kenyon did not found a denomination or movement. However, his influence has been considerable, not least through his books, many of which remain in print. It was he who first developed and taught JDS doctrine in the form in which it still exists today. While it is not historically accurate to regard Kenyon as part of the Word-faith movement, he nevertheless influenced its origins significantly, through his impact on the ‘father’ of the movement, Kenneth E. Hagin (1917-2003). It was through Hagin that the various strands behind Word-faith were threaded together. Hagin was a Pentecostal;⁵ he was associated after the Second World War with healing revivalists such as Oral Roberts,⁶ and he plagiarised Kenyon in much of his teaching.⁷

It is impossible to state that the Word-faith movement began in a particular year, but it is safe to say that it was during the 1960s that Hagin’s ministry grew from that of a relatively unknown travelling evangelist to that of an influential leader with a radio

³ ‘Word-faith’ is the term preferred by Bowman, *Controversy* and Judith A. Matta, *The Born Again Jesus of the Word-Faith Teaching* (Bellevue, WA: Spirit of Truth, 2nd edn 1987 [1984]); cf. ‘Word of Faith’, the term employed by Perriman, *Faith* and Milmon F. Harrison, *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Members of the movement often prefer ‘Faith’ teacher (e.g. Kenneth Hagin Ministries’ publishing arm is ‘Faith Library Publications’). McConnell and Kinnebrew follow this nomenclature, referring to the ‘Faith movement’ (*Promise and Doctrine*). The movement is also known as the ‘Positive Confession’ movement (e.g. by Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity* [Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1985]), as ‘Faith-formula’ theology (e.g. by Charles Farah, Jr., ‘A Critical Analysis: The “Roots and Fruits” of Faith-Formula Theology’, *Pneuma* 3.1 [Spring 1981], pp.3-21), and less formally as ‘Prosperity theology’ or the ‘Health and Wealth’ movement.

⁴ For discussion about whether Word-faith can be validly regarded as a single ‘movement’, and his affirmative conclusion, see Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.28-29.

⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, *How You Can Be Led By The Spirit Of God* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1978), p.39; McConnell, *Promise*, p.60; Perriman, *Faith*, p.3.

⁶ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Praying To Get Results* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1983), p.4; McConnell, *Promise*, pp.60-61, 67-69. Roberts (1918-) is a retired Pentecostal healing evangelist, and founder of Oral Roberts University (ORU). He pioneered the use of television in his ministry. See David E. Harrell, Jr., *Oral Roberts: An American Life* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985).

⁷ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.6-12; and see §§1.3.2; 1.6.3; 6.2.2.

programme, to which was soon added a regular magazine (*The Word of Faith*), a television ministry, and a Bible college.⁸ Other significant leaders in the movement, such as Kenneth Copeland, F. K. C. Price, Charles Capps, and John Osteen, all acknowledge the profound impact of Kenneth Hagin on their lives and ministries.⁹

1.2.2 Beliefs

The movement has been described as “Pentecostal” and as “a radical form of Pentecostalism”,¹⁰ and certainly shares some key beliefs with the latter group. With regard to its attitude to the Christian scriptures, for instance, it can probably best be regarded as ‘fundamentalist’,¹¹ in keeping with much Pentecostalism.¹² Moreover, like Pentecostalism, it is definitely charismatic, in the sense that it expects ‘supernatural gifts’, such as are listed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, to occur today.¹³

⁸ N.a., ‘History’ (n.d.). Accessed 27.10.06 from <http://www.rhema.org/about/history.cfm>; Harrison, *Righteous Riches*, pp.6-7; Perriman, *Faith*, p.3.

⁹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.4.

¹⁰ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.7, 11; also p.94; Perriman, *Faith*, pp.10, 14. It has also been described as “a subdivision of the charismatic movement” by J. F. MacArthur Jr in *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), p.265. The terms ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘charismatic’ are usefully discussed by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee in ‘The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements’, pp.1-6, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988). What the movements have in common, they suggest, is that “both emphasize the present work of the Spirit through gifts in the life of the individual and the church” (p.1). Yet they can be distinguished both ecclesologically and theologically. Ecclesologically, Pentecostals have grouped into denominations, while charismatic Christians are found throughout the historic denominations, or in independent groups. Theologically, Pentecostal groups characteristically hold to a belief in a ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ as a work of grace subsequent, at least logically, to regeneration. This is often associated with a belief that speaking in tongues is evidence of this work of grace (p.1). Charismatic views about ‘baptism in the Spirit’ and speaking in tongues are more diverse. Pentecostal denominations, many of which arose in the early decades of the twentieth century, are sometimes known as ‘classical Pentecostals’, while charismatics, whose movement is often dated back to the 1950s or 1960s (e.g., with regard to Britain, by P. Hocken, *Streams of Renewal* [Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2nd edn 1997 (1986)]) are also known as neo-Pentecostals.

¹¹ For useful descriptions of fundamentalism, see J. I. Packer, ‘*Fundamentalism*’ and *the Word of God* (Leicester: IVP, 1958), chs 1 and 2 (writing in defence of the view) and James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (London: SCM Press, 1977), ch.1.

¹² For Pentecostalism’s relationship to fundamentalism, see H. V. Synan, ‘Fundamentalism’, pp.324-327 in Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*. For an assessment of fundamentalism’s legacy in current Pentecostalism, see William P. Atkinson, ‘Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Worth a Second Look?’, *Evangel* 21:2 (Summer 2003), pp.49-54.

¹³ Thus neither the Word-faith movement nor Pentecostalism, while both fundamentalist, is part of the historic Fundamentalist movement *per se*. Early American Fundamentalism aligned itself significantly with dispensationalism, which was cessationist (Synan, ‘Fundamentalism’, pp.324-327 in Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*). Barr distinguishes between ‘Fundamentalism’ as applied to “a fairly *central and orthodox* current of Protestant conservatism” and “[f]undamentalist attitudes to the Bible... shared by

Beyond these fundamentalist and charismatic beliefs, however, lies a cluster of ideas with which not all Pentecostals would agree. The Word-faith movement is perhaps best known for its focus on faith, as a quality of Christian life which must be spoken out and acted upon in order to become a channel for receiving God's blessings, and on abiding health and wealth as two key examples of those blessings. In particular, its positive attitude to material prosperity has brought it considerable notoriety. However, while these are its best known beliefs, its main proponents also adhere to a distinctive and debatable view of salvation history. In short, humanity was created as a spiritual, God-like being. Its fall into sin represented 'high treason', in which the first humans gave away the authority which God had granted them to their enemy the Devil. Christ came to win their forgiveness, and to regain their authority. Christ's atoning work involved His 'spiritual death', in which He was not only separated from God, but took on 'the satanic nature' and became Satan's prey for the three days which He spent in hell. Redeemed humanity is destined to share God's nature, a destiny into which it is possible by faith to enter in this life.

The idea that Jesus 'died spiritually' was first called 'JDS' doctrine by the late Hobart E. Freeman,¹⁴ a prominent Word-faith teacher.¹⁵ It is also sometimes known as the 'dual death' or 'double death' theory,¹⁶ as it refers to Christ's 'two deaths', physical and spiritual. This view of Christ's death, in its various forms, seems to be relatively common in the movement, so much so that the movement's critics generally regard JDS doctrine as one of its defining characteristics. Nevertheless, it has not been held by all. In fact, Hobart Freeman is among those who refute JDS doctrine, in *Did Jesus Die Spiritually? Exposing the JDS Heresy*.¹⁷ However, Troy

a wide variety of groups and religious currents, which may be primarily interested in faith healing, in speaking with tongues, or in forecasting the end of the world" (*Fundamentalism*, p.7, italics original). Cf. Perriman, *Faith*, pp.88, 100.

¹⁴ Hobart Freeman, *Exposing the JDS Heresy* (n.d.), accessed 26.7.04 from <http://achristiancounselor.com/false.html>, p.1 when printed on A4 paper in TimesNewRoman size 10.

¹⁵ For Freeman's links to the Word-faith movement, see Watchman Fellowship, 'Faith Assembly (Hobart Freeman)', *Watchman Expositor* (2000), accessed 21.7.04 from <http://www.watchman.org/cults/freeman.htm>; and Bruce Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), ch.2.

¹⁶ Brandon, *Health*, p.121; McConnell, *Promise*, p.128. E. W. Kenyon himself used the term 'dual death' (*The Father and His Family* [Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1998 (1916, 1937)], p.137).

¹⁷ Warsaw, Indiana: Faith Ministries Publications, n.d. Also available electronically as *Exposing the JDS Heresy*.

Edwards perhaps goes too far when he claims of Word-faith teachers, regarding JDS doctrine: “There are many who either have never taught it or who once taught it but have rejected this particular teaching.”¹⁸ It is not surprising that he provides no substantiation for this possibly exaggerated claim.

Whether these views of Christ’s death are to be regarded as ‘orthodox’ Christian ones, let alone Pentecostal ones, is a matter of heated recent debate among, particularly, other fundamentalist and more broadly ‘evangelical’¹⁹ Christians. Opinions vary from, at one extreme, viewing Word-faith views as “occultic,”²⁰ through seeing them as “heresy”²¹ and as a “peculiar mix of truth and error”²² to, at the other extreme, regarding such theology as “legitimately... placed within an evangelical Holiness tradition.”²³ While these varied opinions relate to many aspects of Word-faith teaching, the majority of commentators and critics devote space to, among other subjects, JDS teaching. It is not true to suggest that they prioritise this discussion over, say, expressions of concern about the Word-faith movement’s views on physical healing and material prosperity. Nevertheless, the space they devote to the subject indicates that they recognise that JDS theology is an important contributor to the movement’s whole doctrinal system, and worthy of discussion.

¹⁸ Troy J. Edwards, Sr., *The Divine Son of God Tasted Death In All It’s [sic] Phases So You Don’t Have To: Part 1* (May 2003), accessed 21.7.04 from <http://www.victoryword.100megs.com/tenrsn/jds/tenrsn3.html>.

¹⁹ For the purposes of this thesis, David Bebbington’s famous characterisation of evangelicalism will suffice: it is marked by conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (*Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* [London: Routledge, 1989], p.3). While Barr argues for the near synonymy of ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘conservative evangelical’ (Barr, *Fundamentalism*, ch.1), and Packer uses the terms ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘evangelical’ interchangeably (Packer, *Fundamentalism*, ch.1), not all within the wider evangelical community would agree. For example, Nigel Wright sides with conservative evangelicalism against fundamentalism (*The Radical Evangelical: Seeking a Place to Stand* [London: SPCK, 1996], pp.9-10):

Along with conservative evangelicalism, we reject fundamentalism on account of its suspicion of scholarship, its literalist and wooden approaches to the Bible, its separatism and bondage to particular cultures, its apocalypticism and its identification with right-wing political agendas.

²⁰ Hunt and McMahon, *Seduction*, e.g. p.101.

²¹ E.g. Farah, ‘Analysis’, p.21; McConnell, *Promise*, p.120; R. Jackson, ‘Prosperity Theology and the Faith Movement’, pp.16-24, *Themelios*, 15.1 (Oct. 1989), p.23; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.135; Thomas Smail, Andrew Walker and Nigel Wright, “‘Revelation Knowledge’ and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy”, pp.57-77, *JPT* 5 (1994), p.70; Bowman, *Controversy*, p.176.

²² Perriman, *Faith*, p.209.

²³ Geir Lie, ‘The Theology of E. W. Kenyon: Plain Heresy or Within the Boundaries of Pentecostal-Charismatic “Orthodoxy?”’, pp.85-114, *Pneuma*, 22.1 (Spring 2000), p.114, with specific reference to Kenyon.

1.2.3 Organisation

Notwithstanding its historical links to Pentecostalism, the Word-faith movement is not tight-knit ecclesologically. There is no all-embracing denomination.²⁴ Instead, the movement revolves around the teaching of a relatively small number of high-profile teachers,²⁵ who have sought to disseminate their teaching widely, not least through the consistent use of a wide range of modern communications media.²⁶ They typically lead independent churches, often with great numerical success, and lead ‘ministries’ named after themselves.²⁷

The dissemination of their teaching means that people are to be found around the world who do not attend ‘Word-faith’ churches, but who adhere closely to the teaching they receive through television, radio, audio and video recordings, webcasts, magazines and books. In turn, these people may gather small groups around themselves to share in the same diet. This effective ‘cross-fertilisation’ between the movement itself and other groups is compounded by the invitation offered by the movement’s main advocates to people who do not adhere to all the main Word-faith tenets to speak at, for instance, their many conferences. Similarly, churches that do not whole-heartedly endorse every Word-faith distinctive may yet invite its advocates as visiting speakers.²⁸

Such factors mean that the edges of the movement are blurred. As previously noted, it has “much in common with Pentecostalism”, and maintains, in Britain at least, an

²⁴ There are, however, certain support structures for ministers: the International Convention of Faith Ministries, the Rhema Ministerial Alliance International, and the Fellowship of Inner-City Word of Faith Ministries (Harrison, *Righteous Riches*, pp.15-18).

²⁵ E.g. Hagin, Copeland, Kenneth Hagin Jr., F. K. C. Price, John Avanzini, Robert Tilton, Charles Capps, Jerry Savelle. See Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, ch.1: ‘The Cast of Characters’. Another identifiable type of teacher does not adhere to all Word-faith tenets, but propagates enough of them to be associated, at least by critics, with the movement (e.g. Benny Hinn, Morris Cerullo. See Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.59).

²⁶ Cf. the coined term, ‘televangelist’.

²⁷ E.g. ‘Kenneth Hagin Ministries’; ‘Kenneth Copeland Ministries’; ‘Jerry Savelle Ministries’; ‘Morris Cerullo World Evangelism’.

²⁸ Much of the information in this paragraph is gained by the personal experience of the author. For instance, during a ten year period of church ministry at Kensington Temple in London, an Elim Pentecostal Church, he met several in the church who received Word-faith teaching and its ilk in the manner described. Similarly, the church received visits, to preach, from such speakers as Benny Hinn, Morris Cerullo, John Avanzini, and Ray McCauley, all associated directly or indirectly with the Word-faith movement.

“existence on the fringe of Pentecostalism.”²⁹ It is thus not surprising that it is throughout the Pentecostal movement and the wider charismatic world that its influence has most notably pervaded. Nevertheless, some of the movement’s strongest critics are themselves charismatic.³⁰

While the Word-faith influence has spread world-wide, and thus necessarily displays cultural diversity, it remains strongest in the United States of America. There, it presents a display of affluence and success that has drawn the criticisms: “part of the success of the Faith Movement is due to the fact that it feeds off the material longings of the American dream,”³¹ and “[t]here is here also idolization of the American concept of success.”³²

1.2.4 Influence

Farah wrote in 1981 that the Word-faith movement was “the fastest growing heresy in America today.”³³ A year later, McConnell wrote of the “wild success of the Faith movement”.³⁴ In 1988, Kinnebrew stated: “Few Christians in America have not been influenced to some degree by the so-called ‘faith message’ that dominates the religious airwaves today.”³⁵ Since then, the movement has continued to grow. Perriman documents its spread around the globe, and its impact in the UK.³⁶ While he notes that, for cultural reasons, it has not found especially fertile soil in Britain, it has at least made a significant mark on the burgeoning African-led churches of Britain’s cities, and, according to Perriman at the time of his writing, Kingsway International Christian Centre in London was both replete with characteristics of the movement, and possibly Europe’s largest local church.³⁷

²⁹ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.14, 10.

³⁰ E.g. McConnell (*Promise*, p.xx); Brandon (*Health*, pp.15, 47).

³¹ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.62; similarly Brandon, *Health*, p.137; criticisms in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, ch.17, ‘Cultural Conformity’.

³² Farah, ‘Analysis’, p.8.

³³ Farah, ‘Analysis’, p.16.

³⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, p.67.

³⁵ Kinnebrew, *Doctrine*, p.2.

³⁶ The massive growth and pervasive influence of the movement are also well documented by Harrison, *Riches*, pp.14-18.

³⁷ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.9-12.

As the teaching of Word-faith leaders is disseminated to such a great extent through books, radio and television, a survey of broadcasting and publishing statistics gives an idea of the numbers of people who are being influenced by this output. By 1992, Kenneth E. Hagin's radio programme was broadcast by nearly 250 radio stations, and his *The Word of Faith* magazine had a circulation of almost 400,000.³⁸ By 2004, Kenneth E. Hagin and Kenneth Hagin Jr had between them published over 150 books (many of which, it must be conceded, are relatively slim booklets).³⁹ Kenneth Copeland Ministries boasted over 350 'faith-building' titles for sale.⁴⁰ That year, Word-faith and related ministries broadcast on the internet alone 21 channels or networks of television.⁴¹ Another significant Word-faith outlet is the Trinity Broadcasting Network, led by Paul and Jan Crouch.⁴²

As the presence and influence of the movement have grown, so the wider Christian world has taken greater notice of the phenomenon. Both the beliefs and the practices of the movement have evoked strong reactions. Most of these are critical, and some frankly hostile. Examples veritably litter the internet. Published books are also numerous. Very little has been written from outside the movement that is in defence of it, though small pieces of work do exist, such as *What's Right About the Faith Movement* by Jon Ruthven of Regent University.⁴³ Much of the response to the movement is relevant to discussion of JDS teaching, and is reviewed in more detail throughout this thesis.

1.2.5 Conclusion to section 1.2

This section has indicated that, while the Word-faith movement has charismatic and fundamentalist beliefs in common with Pentecostalism, many of its other beliefs are hotly debated, and often rejected as 'heterodox', within charismatic and wider evangelical communities. Given that the movement has grown so significantly in recent decades, the debate which it has spawned is justified. In fact, the movement

³⁸ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.333-334, p.408 n.19, p.409 n.22.

³⁹ See www.faithcenteredresources.com/shopping/shopdisplayproducts.asp?search=yes, as accessed 16.6.04.

⁴⁰ See www.faithcenteredresources.com/authors/kenneth-gloria-copeland.asp, as accessed 16.6.04.

⁴¹ See www.streamingfaith.com, as accessed 16.6.04.

⁴² See www.tbn.org, as accessed 27.10.06.

⁴³ n.d., accessed 25.9.03 from www.victoryword.100megsop2.com/mt1996.htm.

deserves further careful research. Furthermore, this chapter has indicated that review of JDS theology plays an important part in the debate. For this reason, because of the atonement's vital place in Christian theology, and because the death of Jesus Christ commands Christian attention when beliefs about the atonement are articulated, it is fitting that this aspect of Word-faith teaching, as expressed by some of its main proponents, should receive particular study in this project.

1.3 Three foremost JDS teachers

This section introduces the three JDS teachers whose views on the subject form the primary discussion in this thesis. They are not the only JDS teachers within or near the Word-faith movement. Others will be briefly mentioned in §1.4.8. However, they are the most influential, and teach JDS doctrine in its clearest forms.

1.3.1 Essek William Kenyon (1867-1948)

Kenyon's writings are not autobiographical, but his life is helpfully traced from primary and other contemporary sources by Dale Simmons, Dan McConnell and Joe McIntyre.⁴⁴ The son of a logger, Kenyon was born in New York state. He left school aged ten, beginning work in a carpet mill when aged twelve.⁴⁵ The North-Eastern United States where he spent his youth were a part of the world in which many religious people were reacting against a cold, distant Calvinism in favour of immanentist religion,⁴⁶ either of an 'orthodox' Christian hue, as in the closely related Higher Life and Faith Cure movements, or in departures from historic Christianity, such as in New Thought philosophy or Christian Science.

Higher Life movements flourished on both sides of the Atlantic. British versions, centring on conventions in Keswick, believed in a 'second work of grace' that suppressed sin, while American Holiness groups, represented for example by

⁴⁴ Simmons gains much information from Kenyon's unpublished sermon notes (*Kenyon*, p.45, e.g. nn.9, 11, 14, etc.). McConnell includes in his sources interview material with Kenyon's daughter, Ruth Kenyon Housworth (*Promise*, p.52, e.g. nn.2, 7, 9). McIntyre uses published material and unpublished notes and correspondence (Joe McIntyre, *E. W. Kenyon and His Message of Faith: The True Story* [Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1997], p.313, e.g. nn.3, 5, 9).

⁴⁵ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.2; McConnell, *Promise*, p.31; McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.1. McConnell places the start of Kenyon's work in a carpet mill at the age of fifteen.

⁴⁶ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.72.

conferences organised by D. L. Moody at Northfield, Massachusetts, believed that the second work eradicated it.⁴⁷ There were close links between them. While Keswick theology was exported to the USA,⁴⁸ Keswick was itself the product, in part at least, of pre-existing American Higher Life teaching.⁴⁹ The Faith Cure movement practised a ministry of healing through prayer. Healing was believed to have been achieved in the atonement.⁵⁰ Many Higher Life proponents also believed in Faith Cure.⁵¹

Insofar as New Thought was founded by one individual, this was P. P. Quimby (1802-1866).⁵² New Thought ideas included:

Absolute rejection of creeds, creedal theology; Essential divinity of man [*sic*]; Impersonal view of God as Principle; Monistic or pantheistic view of God; Jesus as way-shower, Christ as Principle; Rejection of sin, grace, atonement; Sin and sickness as unreal or mental error; etc.⁵³

Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy. It is a healing movement that focuses on the 'spiritual'.⁵⁴ A close historical and thematic relationship between New Thought and Christian Science is well established. A particular link is the person of P. P. Quimby, whose ideas lie behind New Thought, and who was influential in the development of Eddy's ideas. Christian Scientists minimise her dependence on Quimby,⁵⁵ but it is unarguable that he impressed her deeply.⁵⁶

⁴⁷ For Keswick, see S. Barabas, *So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952). For Northfield, see J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life of Dwight Lyman Moody* (Electronic edn: n.pub, n.d. [1900] accessed 6.2.05 from www.biblebelievers.com/moody/15.html), ch.15, 'The Northfield Conference and the Student Volunteers'.

⁴⁸ D. W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), pp.105-106.

⁴⁹ Barabas, *Salvation*, p.16.

⁵⁰ See Nancy A. Hardesty, *Faith Cure: Divine Healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003); Dayton, *Roots*, p.128.

⁵¹ E.g. Dayton, *Roots*, pp.107, 128

⁵² Horatio W. Dresser, *A History of the New Thought Movement* [Electronic Edition: Cornerstone Publishing, 2001 (1919)], accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm>.

⁵³ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.47. For representative New Thought beliefs, see Ralph Waldo Trine, *In Tune With The Infinite* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1952 [1897]); n/a, www.newthought.net/defined1916.htm, as accessed 18.6.04. However, for difficulties in defining New Thought, see Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp.xiii, 80.

⁵⁴ See Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (Boston, MA: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, rev. edn 1891 [1875]).

⁵⁵ N.a., *Christian Science: A Sourcebook of Contemporary Materials* (Boston, MA: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1990), pp.264-269; D. V. Barrett, *Sects, 'Cults' & Alternative Religions* (London: Blandford, 1996), p.78.

Kenyon himself was converted to Christianity when aged seventeen, licensed as a Methodist Episcopal ‘exhorter’ while still in his teens, and ordained by the Free Will Baptists in 1894.⁵⁷ He resigned from that denomination in 1898, becoming independent. Years later he initiated an application process with the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination. However, he did not proceed with it.⁵⁸ Fundamentally, he continued to think of himself as Baptist all his life.⁵⁹ Over the years, he led at least eight local churches.⁶⁰ His passion for Bible teaching led to his establishing two Bible colleges: Bethel Bible Institute, and much later, the Seattle Bible Institute.⁶¹

Throughout his life he thirsted for education and as a young man his college experience involved, among other brief enrolments, nine months at the Emerson School of Oratory,⁶² which he attended to further his acting career of the time. The school was to some extent influenced by New Thought.⁶³ There is fierce debate about how strong this influence was, and therefore how much of its thinking Kenyon might have imbibed. McConnell claims that Kenyon must have ‘drunk at the well’ of New Thought and emerging Christian Science while there.⁶⁴ In contrast, Simmons observes that Kenyon was never criticised in this regard by his contemporaries, and that Kenyon himself, overtly critical of New Thought,⁶⁵ did not suggest that he had met its influence at the college.⁶⁶ This debate will be explored more fully below. Despite his studies, Kenyon never actually graduated, and only gained honorary

⁵⁶ See, e.g., L. P. Powell, *Mary Baker Eddy: A Life Size Portrait* (Boston, MA: The Christian Science Publishing Society, 1930, 1978), ch.3, especially pp.100-112; Dresser, *History of the New Thought Movement*, ch.5; Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), pp.485, 487; Walter R. Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), ch.5 and p.144.

⁵⁷ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.2, 3, 19; McConnell, *Promise*, p.31.

⁵⁸ Geir Lie, ‘E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?’, pp.71-86, *JEPTA* 16 (1996), p.76; McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.146.

⁵⁹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.129-146, 159.

⁶⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.3, 26, 29, 94, 99, 142, 146, 159.

⁶¹ Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp. 30, 44; McIntyre, *Kenyon*, ch.12, p.157.

⁶² McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.2, 15. Kenyon was ‘backslidden’ from Christian commitment at the time.

⁶³ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.4; McConnell, *Promise*, pp.31-43.

⁶⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, ch.3; also Kinnebrew, *Doctrine*, p.131.

⁶⁵ E. W. Kenyon, *The Two Kinds of Faith* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1998 [1942]), p.17; *Jesus the Healer* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 2000 [1943]), p.77; *The Wonderful Name of Jesus* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1998 [1927, 1935]), pp.69-70.

⁶⁶ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.4.

degrees. He was, however, “a zealous, self-educated student, an avid reader, and a life-long advocate of higher education.”⁶⁷

Whatever influence New Thought and Christian Science might or might not have had on the young Kenyon, there is no doubt that throughout his life he listened to and read many of the leading names in the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements. He was especially influenced by such figures as A. J. Gordon, Andrew Murray, A. T. Pierson, and A. B. Simpson.⁶⁸ These individuals and others will be introduced in more detail in §2.5.2.

Beyond Kenyon’s interaction with Christian thought, McIntyre surveys Kenyon’s avid reading: Homer to Shakespeare; Stoic philosophy to evolutionary biology. McIntyre also refers to Kenyon’s fears concerning the effect of communist politics on America.⁶⁹ However, though Kenyon once used ‘The Why of Bolshevism’ as a section title,⁷⁰ his books evidence no great interest in politics. He complained of “the barn-storming tactics of the modern political demagogue”,⁷¹ but when making social observations about, for instance, the rise in criminality that he saw in his generation, he limited himself to narrowly Christian explanations.⁷² Kenyon was a prolific author, publishing a weekly magazine and numerous books, as well as engaging in radio ministry.⁷³ Undoubtedly influential during his lifetime, Kenyon has retained that influence posthumously. Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society remains active, and 18 of Kenyon’s books are in print in the twenty-first century.⁷⁴

Kenyon first wrote about the ‘spiritual death’ of Christ in 1900.⁷⁵ Though he had considered the matter for the previous seven years, he did not consider it right to

⁶⁷ McConnell, *Promise*, p.31; cf. Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.2.

⁶⁸ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, chs 6-9.

⁶⁹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.113-114.

⁷⁰ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.72.

⁷¹ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.13.

⁷² Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, e.g. p.14.

⁷³ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.106; Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.44.

⁷⁴ See www.kenyons.org/catalog.shtml, as accessed 29.10.06.

⁷⁵ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.179; Geir Lie, *E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?* (Master’s thesis, Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology, revised. ET Geir Lie, William DeArteaga and Glenn Gohr: 1994), p.92 and Lie, ‘Theology’, p.98.

share his view until he had found what he considered to be scriptural warrant for it.⁷⁶ A reference to plural ‘deaths’ in Isaiah 53:9 encouraged Kenyon to believe that this text referred to Jesus dying twice, physically and spiritually. Kenyon initially meant by the phrase, ‘Jesus died spiritually’ that Jesus experienced hell, apart from God and alongside Satan.⁷⁷ However, over the following years, his language and evident meaning developed. Though he continued to believe that ‘spiritual death’ involved separation from God,⁷⁸ the developments occurred in Kenyon’s view of Satan’s role in Christ’s sufferings, in two respects. First, Christ’s suffering on the cross and in the grave involved some participation by Christ in Satan’s nature; secondly, Satan was the author of that suffering. Kenyon’s JDS teaching is set out most fully in his books *The Father and His Family, What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, and *The Bible in the Light of our Redemption*.⁷⁹ It is clear from these works that he was highly committed to the subject, regarding it as central to an understanding of the atonement, and not merely theologically peripheral.⁸⁰

1.3.2 Kenneth Erwin Hagin (1917-2003)

Unlike Kenyon’s writings, Hagin’s works are replete with informal autobiographical information.⁸¹ They reveal that he was born in 1917 and grew up as a Southern Baptist in Texas, in a home which his father left when he was “about 5 or 6 years old”. His paternal grandfather had been rich but his father had squandered this wealth. Hagin knew real hunger as a child, and the family’s difficulties contributed to his mother’s mental ill-health and attempted suicides.⁸² Hagin had congenital heart disease, and his schooling was disrupted because of his severe childhood ill-health. However, he claims that after his conversion to Christ his school grades were

⁷⁶ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.179.

⁷⁷ E. W. Kenyon, ‘The Sufferings of the Christ in Our Redemption: Physical and Spiritual’, *Tabernacle Trumpet* (October 1900), p.118, quoted in Lie, *Kenyon*, p.92 and Lie, ‘Theology’, p.98.

⁷⁸ Kenyon, e.g. *Father*, p.126.

⁷⁹ Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1916 (2nd edn 1937), 1945, and posthumous respectively.

⁸⁰ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, p.118.

⁸¹ E.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Zoe: The God-Kind of Life* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1981), pp.13-17; *Praying*, pp.22-23; *El Shaddai* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1980), pp.24-32; *What To Do When Faith Seems Weak & Victory Lost* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1979), pp.101-107; *Plans, Purposes & Pursuits* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1988), pp.1-14, etc.

⁸² Kenneth E. Hagin, *Demons: And How To Deal With Them* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1968), pp.12-13, quoting p.12.

“straight-A”s.⁸³ He experienced physical healing in 1934, which event profoundly affected the direction and forcefulness of his later ministry. Hagin studied at Southwestern Bible School.⁸⁴

Though initially a Southern Baptist, Hagin testified that he was baptised in the Holy Spirit in 1937, and became a ‘Full Gospel’ pastor in 1939, ministering later in the Assemblies of God.⁸⁵ According to Harrell, Hagin was “deeply influenced” in his early ministry by Oral Roberts.⁸⁶ Interestingly, this is not evident in Hagin’s books, which hardly mention Roberts and suggest that Hagin looked to the example of, especially, E. W. Kenyon, John G. Lake, and Smith Wigglesworth. Wigglesworth and Lake especially are mentioned repeatedly (see §2.6.1 for further details of these men).

Hagin went on to develop a travelling ministry in 1949. He saw himself as a teacher and a prophet.⁸⁷ At about the same time, he sensed God’s charge to “Go teach My people faith”, which in this context meant faith that God will act demonstrably, such as through physical healing. He founded Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1974.⁸⁸ He was a prolific author of magazine articles, booklets and books, and his ministry was broadcast and recorded regularly on radio, television, the internet, audio and video tapes. Since his death in 2003, Kenneth Hagin Ministries continues, under the leadership of his son Kenneth Hagin Junior.

Restricting itself almost entirely to comment on biblical passages and accounts from his own ministry, Hagin’s teaching was, if anything, even less interested in social

⁸³ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.16.

⁸⁴ Kenneth E. Hagin, *How To Make The Dream God Gave You Come True* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1981), p.5. This was later to become Southwestern Assemblies of God College (G. B. McGee, ‘Nelson, Peter Christopher’, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*, p.637).

⁸⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin *Prayer Secrets* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 11th printing 1978), p.11; *How You Can Be Led*, p.39.

⁸⁶ Harrell, *Roberts*, p.152. Harrell cites as evidence a personal interview with Hagin in 1973.

⁸⁷ Hagin, *Ministry*, p.4.

⁸⁸ Kenneth Hagin Jr., Memorial Address, Kenneth E. Hagin’s funeral, 2003, accessed 16.1.05 from http://www.rhema.org/KEH_Memorial/videoclip.cfm (quoted); R. M. Riss, ‘Hagin, Kenneth E.’, p.345, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*. According to Kinnebrew (*Doctrine*, p.13, n.9), Hagin Jr., in various publications, gives either winter 1947/8 or 1950 as the date when his father heard the call, “Go teach My people faith.”

comment and politics than Kenyon's. His educational poverty and Pentecostal world-view may account for this, and he was in this regard typical of 'old-school' Pentecostalism. Wacker observes that early American Pentecostals "betrayed little interest in earthly affairs such as presidential elections or local political controversies."⁸⁹ Hagin's approach was thus usual: his publishing output indicates that he regarded his ministry as being for the many; its content also indicates that he regarded his message as life changing; but he did not see the changed lives of many in socio-political terms. The many were simply a conglomeration of individuals, who could each experience 'personal blessing'.

Hagin did not write about the 'spiritual death' of Christ with anything like the frequency that Kenyon did. It occurs in only a relatively small proportion of his books and booklets, particularly *Redeemed from poverty... sickness... death*, *The New Birth* and *The Name of Jesus*.⁹⁰ The first two of these are merely booklets, and one simply repeats relevant words, almost exactly, of the other. Only *The Name of Jesus* is a full-length book of 160 pages, and even in it Christ's 'spiritual death' gains only a few pages' attention. Furthermore, most or all of his positive JDS teaching is derived directly from that of Kenyon. Some of the relevant material is simply plagiarised from Kenyon's work. For instance, *Redeemed from poverty... sickness... death*, page 29, plagiarises Kenyon's *The Father and His Family*, page 51 at some length.⁹¹ The words continue to appear in almost exactly the same form in the second edition, published in 1983 under the more revealing title: *Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, and Spiritual Death*. In contrast, Hagin was forthright in *The Name of Jesus*

⁸⁹ G. Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.20; cf. R. M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (Oxford: OUP, 1979), ch.XI, e.g. p.222.

⁹⁰ Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1966, 1975, and 1979 respectively.

⁹¹ Kenyon, concerning the 'spiritual death' of fallen humanity (paragraph breaks removed):

Man is now united with the Devil. He is an outcast, an outlaw driven from the Garden with no legal ground of approach to God. He no longer responds to the call of God; he responds only to his new master. Now we understand why Man is more than a transgressor, more than a law-breaker. Man is spiritually a child of the Devil. Man partakes of his father's nature.

Hagin:

Man is now united with the Devil. An outcast. An outlaw. Driven from the Garden with no legal ground of approach to God. He no longer responds to the call of God. He responds only to his new nature; his new master. Man is more than a transgressor. More than a law-breaker and a sinner. Man is spiritually a child of the devil and he partakes of his father's nature.

about his dependence on Kenyon's *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*, quoting the latter no fewer than 22 times.

Hagin's only departure from Kenyon's JDS teaching was in what he did not repeat. Certain of his omissions served to 'soften' his version of JDS teaching. This distinction from Kenyon's position will become evident in later chapters. At this stage it suffices to note in summary that Hagin's commitment to JDS teaching is evident in his writing, but that he held to a version somewhat 'toned down' from that of Kenyon, and not referred to with anything like the frequency.

1.3.3 Kenneth Copeland (1937-)

Copeland, also a Texan, had a far less difficult childhood than did Hagin. Copeland grew up "in a wonderful, godly home", in which there was no material lack. He obviously has fond memories of that time, though he admits that at some point he rebelled, and "drove a wedge between my daddy and me."⁹² He committed his life to God in 1962.⁹³ In 1967, he enrolled at Oral Roberts University. At this point, the Copelands were very poor, but their lives were "completely revolutionized" by Hagin's 'You Can Have What You Say' teaching tapes. Copeland assisted Oral Roberts in the latter's ministry, and "saw Brother Roberts apply the same principles of faith he heard Brother Hagin teach."⁹⁴ Copeland spent less than a year at ORU.⁹⁵ He began "preaching about faith" in 1967, and in 1968 he set up an evangelistic association.⁹⁶ Copeland sometimes refers to Oral Roberts as his "father in ministry",⁹⁷ but McConnell, Kinnebrew and Perriman accurately portray Copeland as a doctrinal successor to Hagin more than Roberts.⁹⁸ There is less evidence that

⁹² Kenneth Copeland, 'Wanted: Sons of the Most High God', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 27.3 (March 1999), p.5; 'Pleasing Daddy Has Its Rewards', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 26.6 (June 1998), p.5 (quoted respectively).

⁹³ Kenneth Copeland, 'Hope: The Blueprint of Faith', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.11 (November 1995), p.5.

⁹⁴ Kenneth Copeland, *The Laws of Prosperity* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1974), p.86; n.a., 'It's Harvest Time!', pp.16-29, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.7 (July/August 1997), pp.18-19, quoting p.19.

⁹⁵ Kinnebrew, *Doctrine*, p.18.

⁹⁶ Kenneth Copeland, 'No Problem!', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 26.7 (July/August 1998), p.4 (quoted); n.a., 'Harvest Time', p.18.

⁹⁷ Copeland, 'To Know the Glory', p.4; or "spiritual father" (Kenneth Copeland, conference speech, Kenneth Copeland Ministries Europe Victory Campaign, Brighton, 7.4.05).

⁹⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, p.4; Kinnebrew, *Doctrine*, p.17; Perriman, *Faith*, p.3.

Copeland has been influenced by Kenyon directly, rather than through Hagin, but he is certainly aware of him. He writes of Kenyon in glowing terms,⁹⁹ and his wife Gloria Copeland refers to Kenyon as “one of the great men of God.”¹⁰⁰ Also, it is perhaps revealing that two of Copeland’s recorded sermons, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* and *What Satan Saw on the Day of Pentecost*, are titles of one of Kenyon’s books, and chapter 14 of that book, respectively.

It would not be surprising, given their different personal histories, if Copeland is better educated than was Hagin. Arguably, his output suggests a greater interest in current affairs than Hagin’s, though that could be due to a difference in temperament rather than in education. One notable example of this interest is Copeland’s articulate concerns about politics. His political priorities are ‘moral’ rather than, say, economic. Encouraging his audience to vote,¹⁰¹ he takes care to teach what factors they should take into account when choosing how to vote. For instance, he affirms the view of Keith Butler, who has held national office in the USA. Interviewed by Copeland, Butler identified, in the run-up to the US presidential election of 2004, the “big three issues” as abortion, the treatment of Israel, and homosexuality.¹⁰² It would, however, be a misconstrual to imagine that Copeland’s interest in politics pervades his teaching. Most of the time, his articles and books are as devoid of political content as are Hagin’s.

Copeland can now be regarded as the unofficial leader of the whole Word-faith movement. Even years before Hagin’s death, McConnell had already identified him as “the heir apparent to Hagin’s throne” and declared that “according to recent polls and press, Copeland is now the ex officio leader of the Faith movement.” Much more recently, Perriman calls him “probably the best known and most influential figure in

⁹⁹ Kenneth Copeland, *Walking in the Realm of the Supernatural*, quoted in Lie, ‘Kenyon’, p.71.

¹⁰⁰ Gloria Copeland, conference speech, Kenneth Copeland Ministries Europe Victory Campaign, Brighton, 8.4.05.

¹⁰¹ Kenneth Copeland, ‘Stand Up and Be Counted’ (2004), accessed 29.10.04 from http://www.upray.org/vote/be_counted.php; ‘A Higher Form of Power’, pp.4-7, *Believer’s Voice Of Victory* 24.10 (November 1996), p.6.

¹⁰² Keith Butler, conversing with Kenneth Copeland, ‘God’s Position on National Government’, *Believer’s Voice Of Victory Webcast*, 20.10.04, accessed 29.10.04 from <http://kcm.org/media/webcasts>.

the Word of Faith movement,” and Harrison names him, along with F. K. C. Price, as one “of the most prominent” Word-faith teachers there is.¹⁰³

Copeland’s espousal of JDS teaching is evident in his sermons (e.g. *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*¹⁰⁴), articles (e.g. ‘The Gates of hell Shall Not Prevail’¹⁰⁵) and booklets (e.g. *Jesus Died Spiritually*,¹⁰⁶ *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*¹⁰⁷). He does not suggest that he has gained his view on the subject from any sources other than the Bible. He admits that his view has been opposed,¹⁰⁸ but he has never directly discussed the arguments of his critics, for instance to counter-argue them. There is no evidence from his publications that his views on the subject have been softened or otherwise altered by this criticism. For instance, *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, his key sermon on the subject, perhaps quoted more than any other by his critics, remains on sale from Kenneth Copeland Ministries, as of October 2006.¹⁰⁹ Whether Copeland’s reception of JDS teaching occurred through Hagin or directly from Kenyon, it does not show evidence of Hagin’s ‘softer’ version, but returns to the fuller account found in Kenyon.

1.3.4 Conclusion to §1.3

All three JDS teachers have had clear links with Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity, though only Hagin was a minister within a Pentecostal denomination. They are of course all American. The association between the Word-faith movement and the ‘American dream’ has already been noted. Though perhaps Kenyon gave himself the most thorough informal education, none of them has had a formal theological education of any significance. Their possibly consequent lack of interaction with theological sources will be considered in more detail in §2.4.2, as part of the discussion there of the evaluative criteria to be used in this thesis.

¹⁰³ McConnell, *Promise*, p.4; Perriman, *Faith*, p.4; Harrison, *Riches*, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Audio tape 02-0017 (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.).

¹⁰⁵ *Believer’s Voice Of Victory* 25.4 (April 1997), pp.4-7.

¹⁰⁶ Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.

¹⁰⁷ Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.

¹⁰⁸ Copeland, ‘To Know the Glory’, p.6; cf. ‘Stick Out’, p.4.

¹⁰⁹ http://kcm.org/usstore/advanced_search_result.php?keywords=what+happened+from+the+cross+t&x=26&y=16, accessed 27.10.06.

While Copeland evidences the greatest interest in politics, none of these teachers emphasises wide-scale social evolution or revolution as the ‘answer’ to the evils of the world. Each is far more interested in the response to Christian teaching of the individual, in terms of immediate personal encounter with God. However, it is not true to say that these teachers are ‘other worldly’. They do not teach their adherents merely to wait for heaven. The individual, they claim, can be greatly altered in this life by the Christian message. The impact of this individual response on societal structures, however, interests them far less.

All three of these teachers are clearly committed to JDS teaching, though there are differences between their versions, and Hagin’s is the most moderate. To these forms of JDS doctrine, and to other versions that are taught, the chapter now turns.

1.4 JDS teaching in its theological context

This section briefly introduces JDS teaching, which will require far fuller discussion throughout the thesis. Kenyon’s, Hagin’s, Copeland’s and other JDS teachers’ views about Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ will be considered in turn in §§1.4.5-1.4.8. Around these, to place their teaching in theological context, a survey will be offered of aspects of their beliefs concerning God and Satan (§1.4.1), humanity (§1.4.2), its fall into sin and ‘spiritual death’ (§1.4.3), the incarnation (§1.4.4), regeneration of the individual (§1.4.9), and the final state of the redeemed (§1.4.10). In these sections, their views are stated, and where appropriate, potential misunderstandings are discussed. However, the sources they access, and do not access, in forming these views are not presented here, but in chapter 2. Also, the arguments they put forward in using these sources will only be considered in later chapters.

1.4.1 God and Satan

JDS teaching’s doctrine of God is not developed. It is more often assumed than stated. However, it is evident that God is the personal, righteous, all-powerful creator of the universe.¹¹⁰ In expressing God’s nature, the teaching refers to life more than

¹¹⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, e.g. pp.19-23; *Presence*, pp.13-14; *Bible*, p.177; Kenneth E. Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 2nd edn, 1985 [1972]), pp.53, 63; *Plead*

love,¹¹¹ though God is certainly loving.¹¹² God's response to sin can be described as wrath,¹¹³ but there is far more emphasis on God's justice.¹¹⁴ Indeed, for Kenyon, justice seems to be God's primary characteristic.¹¹⁵

JDS theology evidences an implicit, if undeveloped, trinitarianism.¹¹⁶ Bowman suggests that Copeland may adhere to a form of monarchianism: he seems, according to Bowman, to teach that there was no personal pre-existence of a second person of the Godhead, but rather only the pre-existence of the impersonal word(s) spoken by God to Abraham, Mary, etc.¹¹⁷ Certainly, Copeland can write, "Jesus had been born into the earth. The Word – that same Word that had brought life to Adam – was back."¹¹⁸ This does portray the pre-existent Christ as God's life-giving word. Bowman may be reaching beyond the evidence, however, to see monarchianism. Copeland also conceptualises Christ as the sent Son, implying personal pre-existence.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in expounding Philippians 2:7, Copeland repeatedly asserts that Christ *chose* to divest Himself of divine glory, thereby ascribing a clear personal attribute to the pre-existent Christ.¹²⁰ Most distinctly bipersonal is Copeland's description of Christ's desolation upon the cross: "Jesus was separated from the presence of God... Think how terrible that must have been... He'd known the life and intimate companionship of God within His spirit for all eternity."¹²¹ In

Your Case (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1979), p.3; Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Righteousness* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1984), p.6; 'Gates', pp.4-5.

¹¹¹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.50; Hagin, *Zoe*, pp.9, 16.

¹¹² Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*, p.10; *Father*, pp.47, 53, 151; *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.97; Kenneth E. Hagin, *Turning Hopeless Situations Around* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1981), p.21; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, p.13.

¹¹³ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.116, 128.

¹¹⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, throughout; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45; Kenneth Copeland, *Our Covenant with God* (Fort Worth, TX: KCP Publications, 1976), p.29.

¹¹⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.138.

¹¹⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.249-250; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.42; Kenneth Copeland, 'The Fire, the Light and the Glory', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.1 (January 1997), p.5; *Force of Righteousness*, p.18.

¹¹⁷ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.155-156.

¹¹⁸ Copeland, 'Bridge', p.4.

¹¹⁹ Kenneth Copeland, 'When the Devil Runs for Cover', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.1 (January 1996), p.5.

¹²⁰ Kenneth Copeland, 'Turning Up the Power', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.10 (October 1995), p.3; 'Taking An Offense', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.7 (July 1995), p.5.

¹²¹ Kenneth Copeland, 'Worthy to be Anointed', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.9 (October 1996), p.6; cf. 'Knowing and Receiving Your Inheritance: Part 1', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 27.3 (March 1999), p.6.

these respects, Copeland's view of the incarnation seems to emerge from some form of simple trinitarianism (or at least binitarianism).

God and Satan are both powerful participants in the drama of humanity's sin and salvation. For those unused to such writing, Satan is mentioned with surprising frequency throughout JDS teaching, and ascribed surprising authority. Satan is regarded as an angel, originally good but fallen into sin,¹²² and since then so evil that Satan personifies sin, having a 'nature' of sin, lying and hatred.¹²³ Satan's importance in the JDS worldview is illustrated by the fact that two of the three concepts enmeshed within the claim that Jesus 'died spiritually', partaking of a satanic nature and becoming Satan's prey, involve Satan directly. The type and degree of God-Satan dualism evident in JDS teaching will be discussed further in §5.2.1.

1.4.2 Humanity

According to Kenyon, God created the natural world for humans, and they were created for "the lonely heart of the great Father God."¹²⁴ 'Man', created in God's image and likeness, was to be God's eternal companion. In describing and alluding to Adam's unfallen nature, Kenyon and Copeland agree that, in some sense at least, it 'partook of God's nature'.¹²⁵ In similar vein, Kenyon and Hagin agreed that, to quote Kenyon, "Man belongs to God's class."¹²⁶ People were to rule over the whole created order, even over angels.¹²⁷ Hagin meant this by the intriguing statement, "Adam was the god of this world."¹²⁸ This dominion had a time limit, such that it could be thought of as a 'lease'.¹²⁹

¹²² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.47, 57, 59-60, 70; Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Origin and Operation of Demons* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1978), pp.7-8; Copeland, 'Gates', p.6.

¹²³ Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*, pp.62-63; *Father*, p.49; Hagin, *Name*, p.31; *Birth*, p.10; Copeland, *Covenant*, pp.9-10; *What Happened*, side 2. See §5.2.2 for discussion of the JDS meaning of 'nature'.

¹²⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, ch.1, quoting p.26; cf. *Presence*, p.14.

¹²⁵ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.28; *Father*, p.37; Kenneth Copeland, 'Because of the Cross', pp.3-6, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 22.4 (April 1994), p.4.

¹²⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, p.34; cf. p.74; *What Happened*, p.62; Kenneth E. Hagin, *Man On Three Dimensions* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1973), p.8; cf. *The Human Spirit* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 6th printing 1980), p.12.

¹²⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.2.

¹²⁸ Hagin, *New Thresholds*, p.56; *Plead Your Case*, p.3.

¹²⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.32, 34. The lease, handed over by humanity to Satan through the fall, will "expire at the Coming of the Lord Jesus." (p.35); cf. Kenneth Copeland, 'Living at the End of Time', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.10 (November 1997), p.6.

In JDS teaching, human nature is rigidly ‘pneumocentric’, and this view is almost always described in trichotomous terms, encapsulated in the famous formula, “man is a *spirit*, who possesses a *soul*, and lives in a *body*.”¹³⁰ This distinctive anthropology forms an important backdrop to JDS teaching, as it lies behind the claim that Jesus not only ‘died spiritually’, but had to die thus, in order to achieve salvation for humanity, owing to the fact that humanity’s needs and the answers to those needs are essentially and necessarily spiritual. This discussion is so relevant to JDS teaching that it will recur (in §3.5).

1.4.3 Humanity’s fall into sin and ‘spiritual death’

“The sin of Adam was the crime of High Treason. God had conferred upon him the legal authority to rule the Universe... Adam turned this Legal Dominion into the hands of God’s enemy, the Devil.”¹³¹ This had a number of consequences for God, Satan and humanity. For God, access to people was now compromised: “Adam committed high treason; and at that point, all the dominion and authority God had given to him was handed over to Satan. Suddenly, God was on the outside looking in.”¹³² For Satan, the gain was not only that authority over creation which had been Adam’s, but also authority over humankind.¹³³ For humanity, the consequence was ‘spiritual death’.¹³⁴ “Spiritual Death is not a state of non-existence; it is a state of existence in a condition separated and alienated from God, and in union with Satan.”¹³⁵ In practice this second of Kenyon’s two characteristics, ‘union with Satan’, involves two features: participation in his nature and subjection to his dominion. It is clear that, in Kenyon’s mind, each human is either in fellowship with God, which involves both partaking of His nature and being under His authority, or in fellowship with Satan, which involves the same two aspects: partaking of his

¹³⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *The New Birth* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1975), pp.6-7, italics original; cf. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.30, 45-46; *Bible*, p.18; Kenneth E. Hagin, *In Him* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1975), p.15; *New Birth*, p.12; *Man On Three Dimensions*, p.8; Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Faith* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1983), p.8; ‘To Know the Glory’, p.6.

¹³¹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.36; cf. *Bible*, p.26; Hagin, *New Thresholds*, p.56; *Plead your Case*, p.3; Copeland, *Covenant*, p.8

¹³² Copeland, *Covenant*, p.8; cf. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.38-40.

¹³³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.36; Copeland, ‘Because of the Cross’, p.4.

¹³⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.41-50; Hagin, *Name*, p.30; Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14.

¹³⁵ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.28.

nature and necessarily being under his authority. A three-fold characterisation of ‘spiritual death’ as separation from God, participation in Satan’s nature, and subjection to his evil power is thus discernible.¹³⁶

God would regain his access through the incarnation, but the process began through His covenant with Abraham: “God’s purpose was to provide an avenue back into the earth. He used Abraham as a mediator, as a way to get His Word into the earth – to open the way for Jesus to come forth.”¹³⁷

1.4.4 The incarnation

For Kenyon, the incarnation of Christ, necessitated by the fall,¹³⁸ operated in two distinct ways. In one respect, it was the unique arrival of the pre-existent divine Christ on earth as an unfallen human, uniquely conceived in a virgin.¹³⁹ This idea, while superficially faithful to traditional formulae, was unsophisticated. It bore traces of ideas akin possibly to adoptionism (“Would it have been possible for God to have come into a child born of natural generation and dwell in the child and be Incarnate?”¹⁴⁰) and, more clearly, to Apollinarianism (“Deity must suffer for humanity. The only way this can be done is for God’s Beloved Son to come... down to earth and assume the physical body of a human”¹⁴¹). Kenyon’s Christology was not, however, identical to Apollinarianism. In the latter, Christ’s spirit and soul were

¹³⁶ Lie also offers a three-fold characterisation (*Kenyon*, p.42). In this thesis, ‘partaking of a sinful, satanic nature’ and ‘becoming Satan’s prey’ will be considered under two separate chapters (5 and 6). This will be done because, although both topics relate to Satan, and Kenyon himself did not make a clear distinction between these two ideas, nevertheless they are quite distinguishable: the former discusses ‘what Jesus was’ – ontological questions about alleged changes to his inner being – the latter considers ‘what was done to Jesus’ – functional questions about activities allegedly performed by others, of which Jesus was the victim.

¹³⁷ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.31; cf. ‘A Covenant of Love’, pp.4-7, *Believer’s Voice Of Victory* 24.6 (June 1996), p.6; E. W. Kenyon, *The Blood Covenant* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 1969 [1949]).

¹³⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, ch.6.

¹³⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.98-105.

¹⁴⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, p.98. Kenyon did, however, effectively deny adoptionism, by stating for instance: “If Jesus had been born of natural generation and God had come into Him, He would have been a fallen spirit, a being subject to the Devil with God dwelling in Him; that would not be an Incarnation.” “If God could have changed the nature of a child after birth so that He could be Incarnate in the child, He could as well have changed the nature of the whole human race in the same way” (*Father*, p.98).

¹⁴¹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.116.

both divine, and his body human.¹⁴² For Kenyon, the spirit alone was divine, the soul and body both human.¹⁴³ Thus, given his anthropology, the ‘real’ Jesus (the spirit) was divine; he only ‘had’ human aspects (soul and body). In contrast to Kenyon, Hagin suggested that Christ’s spirit was human, for in his ‘spiritual death’ it could be separated from God.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Hagin followed Kenyon’s implications that Jesus Christ was ‘God in a body’.¹⁴⁵ Copeland simply seems confused. Christ’s spirit was from ‘eternity’, but he could be separated from God (see §4.2.3).¹⁴⁶

In another respect, Kenyon’s incarnationalism served as a paradigm for future human unions with God, such that, “If Jesus was Incarnate, then immortality is a fact... Every man who has been “born again” is an Incarnation, and Christianity is a miracle. The believer is as much an Incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth.”¹⁴⁷ This latter aspect clearly cohered with possible adoptionistic tendencies of Kenyon’s view of Christ’s incarnation. It was followed precisely by Hagin.¹⁴⁸

Hagin and Copeland provide more detail than Kenyon concerning the incarnation’s functional dynamics. On one hand, “When God took upon Himself human form, He was no less God than when He didn’t have a body.”¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, “He as the Son of God was one thing and He as a person ministering was another thing. He did not minister as the Son of God – He ministered as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵⁰ Copeland is similar: “Jesus did not minister on earth as the Son of God. He could have. He was God manifest in the flesh. The important thing to us is that He didn’t. Jesus ministered on earth as a prophet under the Abrahamic Covenant.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴² J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 5th edn 1977 [1958]), pp.289-292.

¹⁴³ E. W. Kenyon, sermon preached at Bethel Temple, Los Angeles, 29.12.1925, supplied in personal correspondence by Geir Lie, 6.1.06.

¹⁴⁴ Hagin, *Name*, p.32.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Hagin, *Name*, p.28.

¹⁴⁶ Copeland, ‘Worthy’, p.6.

¹⁴⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.100.

¹⁴⁸ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.42.

¹⁴⁹ Hagin, *Man On Three Dimensions*, p.8.

¹⁵⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Understanding the Anointing* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1983), p.4, italics removed. However, H. T. Neuman (‘Cultic Origins of the Word-Faith Theology Within the Charismatic Movement’, *Pneuma*, 12.1 [Spring 1990], pp.32-55, p.54) is inaccurate in describing Word-faith Christology as Ebionite.

¹⁵¹ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.33.

Hagin's and Copeland's motives for their marked functional kenoticism seem to be pragmatic: Jesus is to be seen as an example to be followed, rather than a unique human phenomenon. Thus Copeland, for instance, wrote, “**Everything** Jesus used in His earthly ministry is available to the believer today.”¹⁵² The extent to which Christ in His incarnate ministry is to be regarded as unique or as paradigmatic for Christian ministries today is debated among Pentecostals.¹⁵³ Whatever the merits of that debate, the highly kenotic Christology at work in the JDS view of the incarnation has implications for JDS teaching concerning Christ's ‘spiritual death’ as separation from God (see §4.7.2).

1.4.5 Christ's death: E. W. Kenyon

Kenyon's view of Jesus' death was firmly embedded within his wider view of the atonement, which he saw as primarily substitutionary. Kenyon repeatedly used of Christ the terms ‘(our) sin Substitute’ and ‘substitutionary sacrifice’.¹⁵⁴ The substitution was conceived in penal terms,¹⁵⁵ and in terms of redemption, by which Christ became Satan's victim¹⁵⁶ that humanity might be delivered from the Devil's grasp.¹⁵⁷ The atoning work was seen as just. In it, God displayed His justice not only to Himself and to humanity, but also to Satan.¹⁵⁸ Also, in dying, Christ satisfied this divine justice.¹⁵⁹

To achieve this substitutionary atonement for fallen humanity, which itself had ‘died spiritually’ when it fell into sin, Christ had to die not only physically but also ‘spiritually’. In Christ's case, the term held the same triad of meanings that it had for humans when they fell: separation from God; participation in Satan's nature; and mastery by Satan. “He has taken Man's place... and as He hangs there under judgment on the accursed tree... God turns His back upon Him”; “We know that as

¹⁵² Copeland, *Covenant*, p.33, emphasis original.

¹⁵³ See, e.g., arguments for a paradigm in Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), e.g. p.53, and arguments for uniqueness in Keith Warrington, *Jesus the Healer* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), e.g. pp.160-161.

¹⁵⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.34, 118, 125ff., 133, 147. He also occasionally used the language of identification (e.g. *Father*, p.137, and his book entitled *Identification: A Romance in Redemption*).

¹⁵⁵ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.113, 116.

¹⁵⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, e.g. p.136; *What Happened*, p.65.

¹⁵⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.114-115.

¹⁵⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.113; cf. pp.115, 129.

¹⁵⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp. 101, 116-117, 129.

Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness Jesus was also lifted up a serpent; that is, He was a partaker of Satanic Nature, the old Serpent”; “When Jesus died, His spirit was taken by the Adversary, and carried to the place where the sinner’s spirit goes when he dies.”¹⁶⁰ Kenyon’s case for this view depended on his reading of a number of scriptural texts. Of special note was Isaiah 53:9, referred to earlier (§1.3.1). Kenyon also commented particularly on: Matthew 12:40; Matthew 27:46 = Mark 15:34; John 3:14; Acts 2:24; Romans 10:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 2:15; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; and 1 Peter 3:18.¹⁶¹

Jesus ‘died spiritually’ on the cross, before He died physically. In fact, Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ achieved His physical mortality, such that only now was He able to die physically.¹⁶² This physical death marked the fulfilment of Abrahamic covenant and Old Testament law:

Matthew 27:51 tells us, ‘And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.’ No one knew what this meant. The Holy of Holies was no longer the home of Jehovah. He had moved out of the temple. Jesus had fulfilled the Abrahamic Covenant and the law of the Covenant. There was no need of a priesthood any longer. The high priest had finished his ministry when he made the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world.¹⁶³

Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ lasted until He was ‘born again’ in hell, immediately preceding His physical resurrection. Once thus reborn, He was triumphant over Satan, “for you and for me.”¹⁶⁴ Kenyon taught specifically that the atoning death of Christ achieved forgiveness,¹⁶⁵ moral sanctification,¹⁶⁶ physical healing,¹⁶⁷ and general freedom from Satan’s dominion.¹⁶⁸

1.4.6 Christ’s death: Kenneth E. Hagin

Hagin’s conception of Christ’s saving purpose is usefully encapsulated in the title of his book *Redeemed from Poverty, Sickness, and Spiritual Death*. He taught that this

¹⁶⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.126, 137; *What Happened*, p.47.

¹⁶¹ References to Kenyon’s use of these texts will be cited in later chapters.

¹⁶² Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.43.

¹⁶³ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.42, paragraph breaks removed.

¹⁶⁴ Kenyon, *What Happened*, ch.7, and pp.64-65 (quoting p.65).

¹⁶⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, e.g. p.129.

¹⁶⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, e.g. p.158.

¹⁶⁷ Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*, ch.VIII, e.g. p.27; *Wonderful Name*, pp.29-30.

¹⁶⁸ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.63.

redemption was achieved through substitution,¹⁶⁹ in which God's justice was satisfied.¹⁷⁰ This substitution involved Christ's 'spiritual death': "He took upon himself our sin nature, the nature of spiritual death, that we might have Eternal Life."¹⁷¹ Hagin used many of the scriptural sources to defend his view of Christ's death that Kenyon had before him. Also, what Hagin meant by 'spiritual death', when applied to Christ, was much the same as it had meant to Kenyon, except that Hagin fell short of overtly ascribing Satan's nature to the 'spiritually dead' Christ, and was somewhat hesitant about the nature of the suffering that Christ might have experienced at Satan's hands (see §§5.3.2; 6.2.2 for discussion). Hagin also referred to the physical death of Christ, and presented it in terms of sacrifice.¹⁷² He followed Kenyon in believing that it was only when Christ was made 'sin' that He became physically mortal.¹⁷³

Although Hagin regarded Christ's 'spiritual rebirth' as occurring on the day of His physical resurrection,¹⁷⁴ he did not consistently highlight the period of time during which Christ's body lay in the grave to the extent that Kenyon had done. He agreed with Kenyon that Christ's cry, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) did not indicate that the atoning work for which Christ had come was over.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, he seemed at times to limit the time of Christ's suffering to His hours on the cross,¹⁷⁶ while at other times he could write that "Jesus spent three days and nights in hell," clearly meaning that Christ suffered there.¹⁷⁷ However, he sometimes traced the continuation of Christ's atoning and redeeming work all the way through to His ascension.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁹ E.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Must Christians Suffer?* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1982), p.3; *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.62; *Name*, p.33.

¹⁷⁰ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45; Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Present-Day Ministry of Jesus Christ* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 2nd edn 1983), p.3. Hagin imitated Kenyon's language: "satisfy the claims of justice" (Kenyon, *Father*, p.101); "satisfied the claims of justice" (Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45; *Name*, p.33).

¹⁷¹ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.13.

¹⁷² Kenneth E. Hagin, *Three Big Words* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1983), p.5.

¹⁷³ Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7.

¹⁷⁴ Hagin, *Name*, pp.29, 33.

¹⁷⁵ For Kenyon this cry meant that Christ had completed His public incarnate ministry and had fulfilled the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (*What Happened*, pp.42, 47); for Hagin it meant that Jesus had brought the Old Covenant to a close (*Zoe*, p.43).

¹⁷⁶ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45.

¹⁷⁷ Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.8.

¹⁷⁸ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.43; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.3.

1.4.7 Christ's death: Kenneth Copeland

Copeland's exposition of Christ's death is also presented in substitutionary terms, and this substitution clearly and necessarily involves 'spiritual death': "He was our substitute – bearing our sins, our diseases, our poverty, and our spiritual death." "Jesus became our substitute. If He hadn't died spiritually, then we could never be made alive spiritually. But He did!"¹⁷⁹ Copeland uses the same range of texts to support his thesis as did Kenyon and Hagin, and mirrors Kenyon's thesis that this agony of Christ lasted three days, and was followed by Christ's 'rebirth'.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Copeland's understanding of what this 'spiritual death' involved includes all three of the components that Kenyon conceived of: separation from God; participation in Satan's nature; and suffering at Satan's hands.¹⁸¹

Like Kenyon, Copeland understands Christ's physical death to achieve the cessation of "the Abrahamic Covenant."¹⁸² He also declares that Christ's physical suffering on the cross achieved physical healing for those who believe.¹⁸³

1.4.8 Christ's death: other JDS teachers

While Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland have focused on the physical and spiritual aspects of Christ's death, some JDS teaching takes the analysis further. Tom Brown, leader of Word of Life Church in Texas, declares that the death of Jesus was in fact threefold: "physical, spiritual, and soulish."¹⁸⁴ This understanding clearly fits with a tripartite view of humanity, and coheres with his reading of Isaiah 53 and the sacrifices conducted on the Day of Atonement. Nevertheless, it seems to remain a minority view within the range of JDS teaching.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.28; 'To Know the Glory', p.6.

¹⁸⁰ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-6.

¹⁸¹ Kenneth Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3; 'Gates', p.5.

¹⁸² Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3.

¹⁸³ Kenneth Copeland, e.g. 'The Power of Resistance', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory*, 25.6 (June 1997), p.5.

¹⁸⁴ Tom Brown, 'Did Jesus Suffer in Hell?' (n.d.), accessed 25.9.03 from www.tbm.org/jesusuffershell.htm.

¹⁸⁵ Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland do not refer to a 'soulish' death of Christ. Kenyon did, rarely, mention Christ's 'soul travail'. He was encouraged to do so by the wording of Isaiah 53:10-11 (*Father*, pp.125-126).

It is commoner for other versions of JDS teaching to go ‘less far’ than that of Kenyon, Hagin, and Copeland. Of the three ideas inherent within Kenyon’s and Copeland’s versions, and to a lesser extent Hagin’s, Greg Bitgood, pastor of Christian education at Kelowna Christian Center, Canada, clearly maintains all three concepts,¹⁸⁶ but his language regarding the idea of Christ’s taking a satanic nature is guarded.¹⁸⁷ He is explicit in stating that fallen humanity is united with Satan’s nature, but only implicit in suggesting that Christ, in His substitutionary death, shares the same experience.¹⁸⁸

The late Paul Billheimer’s *Destined for the Throne*¹⁸⁹ resembled Kenyon’s teaching in certain respects,¹⁹⁰ and may have been influenced by his writing. Billheimer used the phrase ‘died spiritually’ of Christ, and related this to the first and third of Kenyon’s ideas: separation from God, and suffering at Satan’s hands.¹⁹¹ It is less clear whether Billheimer would have agreed with Kenyon’s second concept. He did not write of Adam’s participating in Satan’s nature. Nor did he use such language of Christ’s suffering. Nevertheless, he wrote: “Because He was ‘made sin’ (2 Corinthians 5:21), impregnated with sin, and became the very essence of sin, on the cross He was banished from God’s presence as a loathsome thing. He and sin were made synonymous.”¹⁹² Possibly, Billheimer meant by ‘sin’s essence’ what Kenyon meant by ‘sin’s nature’, which the latter clearly identified with satanic nature.¹⁹³ Thus, although Billheimer did not use Kenyon’s language, he offered a similar concept. It will emerge later (§5.3.2) that Hagin’s presentation is similar.

¹⁸⁶ Gregory J. Bitgood, *The Mystery of the 3 Days and Nights* (n.d.), accessed 25.9.03 from www.kcc.net/greg/3days.htm, pp.20, 21, 25, 35, 51 (page numbers when document formatted on A4).

¹⁸⁷ Bitgood, *Mystery*, p.21.

¹⁸⁸ Bitgood, *Mystery*, pp. 20, 25.

¹⁸⁹ London: Christian Literature Crusade, 1975.

¹⁹⁰ For example, Kenyon wrote of the ‘legal’ and ‘vital’ sides of the atonement (e.g. *Father*, pp.149-151), Billheimer of the ‘legal’ and ‘dynamic’ sides (e.g. *Throne*, chs 5, 6; though Billheimer’s ‘dynamic’ is not identical to Kenyon’s ‘vital’); Kenyon’s ‘the cross to the throne’ terminology (e.g. his book title *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*) occurs in Billheimer, *Throne* (p.88); Billheimer’s view of humanity’s fall and its consequences resembles Kenyon’s in many respects.

¹⁹¹ Billheimer, *Throne*, pp. 86, 84 respectively.

¹⁹² Billheimer, *Throne*, p.83.

¹⁹³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.137.

Theo Wolmarans of Christian Family Church International, Texas; Troy Edwards of Victory Through The Word Ministries; and Joe McIntyre, president of Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, maintain use of the terminology,¹⁹⁴ but restrict their conceptualisation to the first of Kenyon's ideas: separation from God. McIntyre comes close to using the terminology of the second, 'partaking of the satanic nature': in expounding 2 Corinthians 5:21, he writes that "Jesus took the sin nature." He admits ignorance, however, as to what this might mean: "How Christ's soul was made sin and received our sin is probably beyond our ability to reason out."¹⁹⁵ Edwards specifically excludes a belief that Christ's hellish suffering was caused by Satan:

I have to admit that the fact that Christ descended seems to imply that He was not dragged down there by Satan and his cohorts. Although Satan's part in our Lord's sufferings is not taught enough, we in the Word-Faith movement should caution ourselves against "overcompensating" in our teaching when we attempt to correct this negligence in the church.¹⁹⁶

A departure from the examples given above is evident in the writing of Bill Kaiser, director of Word of Faith Leadership and Bible Institute, Texas. He declares that when Adam sinned he "died in his spirit man, in the spirit realm",¹⁹⁷ and in other ways generally follows Word-faith terms and concepts. Yet, even though when he describes Christ's death he equates this experience with that of Adam, he refrains from using the term, 'Jesus died spiritually'.¹⁹⁸ Thus, by the definition offered in the introduction to the chapter, his is not JDS teaching. It can, however, be seen to lie very close to it. Similarly, the teaching of Oral Roberts applies 'spiritual death'

¹⁹⁴ Theo Wolmarans, *Blood Covenant* (Dallas, TX: Word of Faith Publishing, 1984), p.93; Edwards, *The Divine Son, Part I*; Joe McIntyre, *Jesus' Spiritual Death*, accessed 26.7.04 from www.kenyons.org/JesusSpiritualDeath.htm.

¹⁹⁵ McIntyre, *Jesus' Spiritual Death*. McIntyre's caution on this point is confirmed in personal correspondence (1.8.06).

¹⁹⁶ Troy J. Edwards, Sr, *The Divine Son of God Tasted Death In All It's [sic] Phases So You Don't Have To. Part Two: Did Jesus Descend to Hell?* (2002), n.11, accessed 28.7.04 from www.victoryword.100megspop2.com/tenrsn/jds/tenrsn3_1.html. Commentators also number among JDS teachers the well known F. K. C. Price (McConnell, *Promise*, p.120), Jan Crouch (Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.164-165) and Benny Hinn (Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.155-156; Hanegraaff notes that Hinn has altered his views).

¹⁹⁷ Bill Kaiser, *Who In The World In Christ Are You?* (Dallas, TX: Word of Faith Publishing, 1983), p.37.

¹⁹⁸ Kaiser, *Who In The World*, p.78. Jesus was "separated from God."

terminology to fallen humanity, but not to Christ.¹⁹⁹ Kaiser and Roberts illustrate the fact that to categorise someone as a JDS teacher requires an arbitrary definition being imposed upon a spectrum of similar views (see §1.1).

1.4.9 Regeneration of the individual

Individuals can be ‘born again’ by repentant and believing reception of the Christian gospel.²⁰⁰ This rebirth constitutes a change from spiritual death to life, from a satanic to the divine nature.²⁰¹ For Kenyon, the concern at this point was to champion the possibility of complete appropriation through the ‘finished work of Christ’, from the point of regeneration, of a God-given righteousness and sanctification, in the face of popular Wesleyan teaching of his day concerning sanctification as a second work of grace.²⁰² Thus while Kenyon admired many Higher Life teachers, he did not accept all Higher Life teaching.

Following Kenyon, Hagin understood regeneration to be an incarnation paralleling that of Christ. In line with this, he wrote, “That’s who we are; we’re Christ!”²⁰³ Unsurprisingly, these claims have been regarded as unacceptable by Hagin’s critics.²⁰⁴ In context, however, there is a certain, if highly questionable, logic in Hagin’s thinking, as illustrated by the following extract:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:15... And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Finally, the believer is called “Christ” and the unbeliever is called “Belial.” That’s who we are; we’re Christ! Jesus is the Head and we are the Body of Christ. Your head doesn’t go by one name and your body by another, does it?... Paul calls the individual member of the Body of Christ, “Christ.”²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Roberts writes of fallen humanity’s “spiritual death”, meaning by it people’s “separation from God”. Nevertheless, his presentation of the crucifixion does not resemble Kenyon’s (Oral Roberts, 3 *Most Important Steps to your Better Health and Miracle Living* [Tulsa, OK: Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, 1976], pp.66-67, 193).

²⁰⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.144-145, 151; Hagin, *New Birth*, p.14; Copeland, *Laws of Prosperity*, p.101.

²⁰¹ E. W. Kenyon, *In His Presence* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, 2003 [1944]), p.61; *Father*, pp.148-149; Hagin, e.g. *New Birth*, ch.II; Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.7; *Force of Righteousness*, p.5.

²⁰² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.153-160; *In His Presence*, p.57; see Kimberley Ervin Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing* (Blandford Forum: Deo Publishing, 2006), for an exposition of differences between ‘Finished Work’ and ‘Wesleyan Holiness’ soteriologies, in the context of early Pentecostalism.

²⁰³ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.41, emphases removed.

²⁰⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, p.122; Bowman, *Controversy*, p.189; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.175.

²⁰⁵ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.41. Emphases and paragraph breaks removed. If Hagin had applied his own anthropology here, that the body is not the true self, but only its house, he might have reached different conclusions.

JDS teaching's eschatology is highly realised, and rebirth entitles the redeemed to every imaginable good in this life,²⁰⁶ protecting the redeemed from almost every imaginable ill.²⁰⁷

1.4.10 The final state of the redeemed

The authors believe in a return of Christ to the earth, sometimes described as premillennial and imminent. At that point believers will receive immortal bodies like Christ's resurrection body, and be with Christ for ever.²⁰⁸ Following the promises of the book of Revelation, Kenyon looked forward to the 'New Heaven and the New Earth' as the home of redeemed humanity, in which no sin or pain could exist. Kenyon hinted that this final state would mirror that which humans enjoyed before the fall.²⁰⁹

Hagin and Copeland's highly realised eschatology and intensely pragmatic teaching mean that they hardly mention the future life of Christians. This paucity of reference seems to be due to a concern that their readers should appropriate their Christian inheritance in this life.²¹⁰ Apparently, the only blessing which Hagin would admit was as yet withheld from Christians was the end to physical death.²¹¹ Even this future-oriented perspective was blunted by Hagin's belief that long life here on earth is a blessing available to all Christians who have faith for it.²¹²

1.4.11 Conclusion to section 1.4

It is clear that the teaching that Christ 'died spiritually' lies embedded within, and is shaped by, views across many aspects of theology. That humans are primarily

²⁰⁶ Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*, 86; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.42; Kenneth Copeland, 'Turn Your Hurts Into Harvests', pp.6-9, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.7 (July/August 1997), p.7; 'Expect the Glory!', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.3 (March 1995), p.2; 'Power of Resistance', p.5; *Laws of Prosperity*, p.58.

²⁰⁷ Hagin, *Must Christians Suffer?*; Copeland, 'Power of Resistance', p.6; *Force of Faith*, p.29.

²⁰⁸ Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.284-287; *Father*, pp.212-213; Kenneth E. Hagin, *Don't Blame God!* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1979), p.32, *El Shaddai*, p.21; *Man on Three Dimensions*, pp.9, 17; Copeland, 'Living at the End', pp.5-6.

²⁰⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, ch.17.

²¹⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Knowing What Belongs to Us* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1989), p.2; *New Birth*, p.28; Copeland, 'Turn Your Hurts Into Harvests', p.7; 'Expect the Glory!', p.2; 'Power of Resistance', p.5; *Laws of Prosperity*, p.58.

²¹¹ Hagin, *Don't Blame God!*, p.23.

²¹² Hagin, *El Shaddai*, ch.3.

spiritual lies behind the claim that Christ had to ‘die spiritually’. That the first humans are believed to have ‘died spiritually’ when they succumbed to temptation influences what is meant when JDS teachers declare that Christ himself ‘died spiritually’. The JDS view of the incarnation may aid belief in the separation of Christ from God on the cross. That Satan is so important in the JDS world-view relates to his active role in Christ’s ‘spiritual death’. Certain implications of this network of beliefs will be explored as the thesis develops.

1.5 Categories of participant in the JDS debate

This section introduces those who are not JDS teachers, but who have contributed significantly to the debate about the teaching, indirectly or directly. First, the section considers social and ecclesiastical categories of debater (§1.5.1). Thereafter, it categorises their stances (§1.5.2).

1.5.1 Social and ecclesiastical categories

It is probable that opposition to JDS teaching first arose within the Word-faith movement itself, in the person of Hobart E. Freeman (1920-1984). His book *Did Jesus Die Spiritually? Exposing the JDS heresy* is undated, but even if it came from near the end of his life, it testifies to his designation of the “error” as JDS “several years ago”.²¹³ Whatever the immediate response to his challenges might have been within the movement, it is clear that JDS teaching was not expunged by them. Freeman’s contribution will be reviewed in §1.6.1. At this stage it is of interest to note that, in contrast to the lack of formal theological education gained by the three JDS teachers who are the focus of this thesis, Freeman had a doctorate in theology and was for a time a professor in Hebrew language and Old Testament studies.²¹⁴

Whether or not Freeman’s book came to the immediate attention of observers outside the movement, it was in the same period that they too began to raise doubts about certain Word-faith beliefs and practices. It is perhaps not surprising that it was among Pentecostals and charismatics that an academic response was first mounted.

²¹³ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, p.1.

²¹⁴ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, pp.1, 14; Barron, *Gospel*, p.19; Watchman Fellowship, ‘Faith Assembly’.

Gordon Fee of Regent College published some of his concerns in 1979,²¹⁵ but a greater output began to emerge from even closer to ‘home’: the university set up by Oral Roberts, ORU. Given that Roberts’ theology indicates some commonalities with the Word-faith movement,²¹⁶ Hagin and Copeland admired and were influenced by Roberts, and Copeland briefly attended ORU, it is intriguing that the relationship between the Word-faith movement and the university later became stormy, especially in the 1980s. Roberts invited a succession of Word-faith preachers to speak at ORU. Their message met with overt resistance from certain teachers, including Charles Farah.²¹⁷ Farah’s 1979 book and 1981 article²¹⁸ initiated an academic debate concerning Word-faith doctrines, which was taken up enthusiastically by two postgraduate students, McConnell²¹⁹ and Simmons.²²⁰ McConnell’s 1982 master’s dissertation was published in the UK as *The Promise of Health and Wealth*. Simmons’ unpublished 1985 master’s work focused on Hagin,²²¹ but his subsequent doctoral research at Drew University (1988) turned to Kenyon,²²² and was published as *E. W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty*. While McConnell is strongly critical of the movement, Simmons is more dispassionate, seeking to explain Kenyon rather than to criticise or defend him. Both contributions will be studied in §§1.6.3; 1.7.1.

Another group of contributions to the JDS debate comes unsurprisingly from American ‘cult-watch’ ministries. There is a vast number of such ministries.²²³ One example, Christian Research Institute, has as its president Hank Hanegraaff, author of a lengthy, detailed and uncompromising critique of the Word-faith movement,

²¹⁵ McConnell, *Promise*, p.191.

²¹⁶ See §1.4.8. He also promotes the spirit over the mind and body (Roberts, *Important Steps*, pp.66-67). See §3.5.1 for Word-faith anthropology.

²¹⁷ Harrell, *Roberts*, pp.423-427.

²¹⁸ Charles Farah, Jr, *From the Pinnacle of the Temple* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1979) and ‘Analysis’.

²¹⁹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.xv; Perriman, *Faith*, p.14.

²²⁰ Simmons, correspondence with author, 29.10.06; McConnell, *Promise*, p.194.

²²¹ Dale Simmons, ‘A theological and historical analysis of Kenneth E. Hagin’s claim to be a prophet’ (unpublished master’s thesis, ORU, 1985).

²²² Entitled *The Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power and Plenty: As Seen in the Writings of Essek William Kenyon* (William DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit* [Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2nd edn 1996 (1992)], p.351).

²²³ An index is available at <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/cultsect/ccmlinks.htm>, as accessed on 16.1.05.

Christianity in Crisis (1993).²²⁴ Robert Bowman also worked for Christian Research Institute prior to writing *The Word-Faith Controversy* (2001).²²⁵ At the time of publication, he was president of the Institute for the Development of Evangelical Apologetics.²²⁶ Another opponent of the Word-faith movement from these circles is Dave Hunt. When he wrote *The Seduction of Christianity* (1985), he led a ministry called ‘The Berean Call’, which name is self-explanatory for those familiar with Acts 17:11. Typically, and including those mentioned above, these ministries are evangelical, and of course are concerned to protect ‘right doctrine’. The attempt by Christians to offer apologetics for ‘orthodox’ doctrine, to distinguish clearly between these and ‘heterodox’ ones, and to warn Christians of the teaching of ‘heterodox’ groups will be regarded by many as commendable. However, there is a temptation for such organisations to become self-appointed guardians of their own brand of ‘orthodoxy’ (it is easy to find ‘cult-watch’ groups that denounce Pentecostalism, for instance²²⁷), and to be uncharitable. Unsurprisingly, therefore, these organisations have been criticised, for instance by J. R. Spencer.²²⁸ The contributions of Hanegraaff and Bowman will be considered in §§1.6.5; 1.8.1.

Although most of the debaters mentioned so far are negative about Kenyon and his teaching, Kenyon himself continues to have admirers and defenders whose contributions to the debate can thus be grouped together. McIntyre’s *E. W. Kenyon and His Message of Faith: The True Story* is an impressively useful historical source, detailing the influence on Kenyon of a number of important church leaders. William DeArteaga, an Episcopalian,²²⁹ and Geir Lie, a Scandinavian scholar,²³⁰ engage more directly in theological debate, succeeding in writing of Kenyon from some critical

²²⁴ www.equip.org, as accessed 16.1.05.

²²⁵ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.266.

²²⁶ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.255.

²²⁷ There is even one denouncing cult-watch ministries! See <http://watch.pair.com/cult-intro.html>, as accessed 16.1.05.

²²⁸ J. R. Spencer, *Heresy Hunters: Character Assassination in the Church* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1993).

²²⁹ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.7.

²³⁰ Lie, *Kenyon*, p.vii. Lie studied within the Word-faith movement, at Victory Bible Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma (Lie, *Kenyon*, p.vii).

distance, but still supporting him overall, believing that criticisms of him have been vastly overstated. DeArteaga and Lie will be reviewed in §§1.7.2; 1.7.3.²³¹

Thus far, almost all the debaters mentioned in this section have been American. The earliest British contribution to be reviewed in this thesis was Andrew Brandon's *Health & Wealth* (1987). At his time of writing, Brandon was a teacher and evangelist with Christ for the World, having worked previously with British Youth for Christ and The Evangelization Society.²³² His book is highly negative about JDS teaching, as is the discussion offered by Smail, Walker and Wright (1994), which holds the distinction of being one of the few offerings from well known academics.²³³ More recently, the Evangelical Alliance (UK) has taken an interest in the Word-faith movement. This came largely through Morris Cerullo's series of meetings held in London in the 1990s.²³⁴ The Evangelical Alliance asked its Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals to consider the movement, and as a result *Faith Health and Prosperity*, edited by Perriman, was published in 2003. This balanced book thus represents an agreed British evangelical perspective.²³⁵ All these British contributions will be reviewed individually below (§§1.6.4; 1.6.6; 1.8.2).

In conclusion, it is clear that much response has arisen 'close to home'. First, most is American. Also, almost all is evangelical, and a fair proportion is charismatic. On the other hand, a wide spectrum can be perceived between doctoral research at one end and popular writing, built on limited research, at the other.

²³¹ The reason that McIntyre will not is that he is a moderate JDS teacher, already introduced in §1.4.8.

²³² Brandon, *Health*, back cover.

²³³ Smail, Walker and Wright, 'Revelation Knowledge', also published as chapter 10 of *Charismatic Renewal* (London: SPCK, 1995).

²³⁴ Perriman, *Faith*, 'A Note on the Background and Production of the Report', p.x.

²³⁵ Perriman is named as editor; contributors are not individually named. Thus the book seems to express the opinions of Perriman himself, while also effectively being a position statement by the Evangelical Alliance. It is presented as *A Report on 'Word of Faith' and 'Positive Confession' Theologies by The Evangelical Alliance (UK) Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals*.

1.5.2 Categories of response

Not only can debaters be categorised according to their social and ecclesiastical background. They can also, of course, be categorised by the response that they have offered to the Word-faith movement and JDS teaching. Most commentators have opposed the movement, its teaching and its practice. Closely linked to this has been a developing historical awareness about the links between Kenyon and the Word-faith movement, and his own alleged links with New Thought philosophy. The most significant voices who contribute from these and similar viewpoints are introduced in §1.6, under the heading, ‘Growing opposition’. However, not everyone agrees. Some researchers into Kenyon’s life offer a different perspective on his sources and on his resultant teaching. They are introduced in §1.7, as ‘Dissenting voices’. More recently, those who have listened carefully to both sides of the debate have offered their ‘Mediating positions’. These will be considered in §1.8. Under each heading, contributors will be considered in the chronological order of their first significant submitted or published contributions.

1.6 Growing opposition

Much that has been written about the Word-faith movement or its JDS doctrine has been written *against* the movement and the doctrine. This is true of the eight authors reviewed in this section. It must be noted, however, that the first two are somewhat anomalous, in that: Hobart Freeman (§1.6.1) was actually part of the movement, but wrote against JDS doctrine; Charles Farah (§1.6.2) did not write about JDS teaching as such, but played a pivotal role in initiating the debate and in supervising research that took it further.

1.6.1 Growing opposition: Hobart Freeman

The late Hobart Freeman was the one prominent Word-faith teacher to have spoken out strongly against JDS doctrine (§1.5.1). His short book, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually? Exposing the JDS Heresy* was uncompromising, as its title makes clear, in its outright rejection of any truth claims in JDS teaching. He not only called JDS teaching a

“heresy of the most serious kind,” but wrote with reference to its teachers of “the enormity of their delusion.”²³⁶

His work was devoted almost entirely to discussion of certain scriptural texts, seeking to show how JDS teaching misunderstood them. Focus was on, for instance, Psalm 22:1; Isaiah 53:9; Luke 23:43, 46; John 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Timothy 3:16. In this discussion, a repeated observation was that JDS teachers misunderstood these texts at least partly because they did not, unlike Freeman, have a working knowledge of the original biblical languages. He put his knowledge to use, for example, in seeking to undermine their use of the plural ‘deaths’ in Isaiah 53:9, and their equating of sheol and hades with hell.²³⁷ As well as interacting with JDS teaching at the level of individual texts, Freeman did seek to offer a wider perspective on biblical teaching. In this endeavour, he focused to a great extent on his understanding of biblical typology, which he used to argue that Jesus must have been an unblemished sacrifice, rather than a participant in a sinful, satanic nature.²³⁸

Beyond these textual explorations, Freeman did not examine possible historical roots of JDS teaching, and did not mention Kenyon or New Thought. Also, despite his theological education, Freeman made little use of historical theology. He claimed that Christ could not have been separated from God on the cross because intra-trinitarian separation is “impossible.” He also judged that the human nature of the incarnate Christ was unfallen.²³⁹ Beyond this, there was little comment that indicated interaction with the teaching of the church through the millennia.

The various extents to which study of the Bible, of JDS teaching’s historical origins, and of historical theology have contributed to subsequent debate begin to emerge as more of the debaters are reviewed, but are explored more fully in chapter 2, when criteria and methods for evaluating JDS teaching, both for current debaters and for this thesis, are discussed in full.

²³⁶ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, p.1.

²³⁷ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, pp.14-16, 21.

²³⁸ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, pp.4-7.

²³⁹ Freeman, *JDS Heresy*, pp.8, 12.

1.6.2 Growing opposition: Charles Farah

In 1979 Charles Farah of ORU published *From the Pinnacle of the Temple*. Farah's prime concern is expressed in the book's subtitle (*Faith or Presumption?*). The book seeks to warn against presumption in Christian faith healing. It is not a criticism of the Word-faith movement *per se*, but does inevitably focus on this more extravagant end of the spectrum of practice.²⁴⁰

Farah wrote from within the charismatic movement, as someone who believed in and practised a ministry of Christian healing.²⁴¹ Perriman declares that, "as a charismatic [Farah] endorsed many of the distinctive emphases of Word of Faith teaching."²⁴² Certainly, *From the Pinnacle of the Temple* contains at least some praise:

We can only be grateful to God for the great influence positive confession has upon all of us, and for the tremendous effectiveness faith teachers have developed in spreading this truly good news of God's loving concern for our health and our prosperity.²⁴³

However, by 1981, when Farah published a not dissimilar article in *Pneuma*, he concluded it with this overall verdict of the movement: "It is, in fact, a burgeoning heresy."²⁴⁴

Beyond Farah's pragmatic and pastoral concerns, his book discusses his theological ones, which revolve around the Word-faith movement's "man-centered theology",²⁴⁵ its dualism,²⁴⁶ its over-realised eschatology, and its lack of an adequate thanatology.²⁴⁷ In his later article, his emphasis also involves the movement's hedonistic Gnosticism.²⁴⁸ However, Farah does not criticise the Word-faith movement's ideas concerning the atonement. While Farah's work does not therefore contribute directly to the debate about JDS teaching, it does raise one issue of fundamental importance to the subject: Farah identifies dependence in Word-faith

²⁴⁰ Chapter 7 is entitled 'The Faith Theology', and numerous references are made to 'faith teachers' and 'faith teachings' (pp.87, 117, 124, etc.).

²⁴¹ As well as being a professor at ORU, Farah was a leader of a charismatic church (DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.225; Perriman, *Faith*, p.13).

²⁴² Perriman, *Faith*, p.13.

²⁴³ Farah, *Pinnacle*, p.117.

²⁴⁴ Farah, 'Analysis', p.21.

²⁴⁵ Farah, *Pinnacle*, p.136.

²⁴⁶ Farah, *Pinnacle*, p.152.

²⁴⁷ Farah, *Pinnacle*, pp.158-164.

²⁴⁸ Farah, 'Analysis', pp.13-15.

teaching on the earlier writing of Kenyon. “Most important of all influences on faith-formula theology are the works of E. W. Kenyon. Mr. Kenyon’s many writings form a treasure trove which all present faith-formula teachers mime [*sic*].”²⁴⁹ Farah does not, in turn, discuss the origins of Kenyon’s own views, but this potentially important line is pursued by one of Farah’s students, Dan McConnell.

1.6.3 Growing opposition: Dan McConnell

McConnell’s ORU master’s thesis, *The Kenyon Connection: A Theological and Historical Analysis of the Cultic Origins of the Faith Movement*, was submitted in 1982. An expanded and updated version of this work was published in the USA in 1988 under the title *A Different Gospel: A Historical and Biblical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement*.²⁵⁰ In 1990 it was published in Britain as *The Promise of Health and Wealth*, with the same subtitle. This work, as the titles indicate, is more specifically focused than Farah’s book on the Word-faith movement, and is thereby more detailed in its study. It discusses historical issues in far more depth, and mounts a more sustained exegetical response to Word-faith doctrines. In particular, it fully explores Kenyon’s role in the movement’s inception, and his own possible earlier reception of New Thought philosophy. Furthermore, it devotes a chapter to Word-faith ideas concerning the atonement, alongside chapters about ‘revelation knowledge’, faith, healing and prosperity.

Some of McConnell’s findings have proved indisputable. Of special note is his careful documentation of the wholesale plagiarism of Kenyon’s work by Hagin.²⁵¹ Through Hagin, as McConnell ably shows, Kenyon’s views were widely distributed to and accepted by the whole Word-faith movement.²⁵² McConnell’s historical research is also useful in highlighting Kenyon’s attendance, in 1892-1893, at the Emerson College of Oratory,²⁵³ led by one Charles Emerson, who himself was on a religious pilgrimage which ended with his joining, in 1903, the Christian

²⁴⁹ Farah, ‘Analysis’, p.6.

²⁵⁰ Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988.

²⁵¹ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.5-12. McConnell lists, with relevant lengthy quotations, eight of Kenyon’s books from which he notes sustained plagiarism by Hagin.

²⁵² McConnell, *Promise*, p.13.

²⁵³ McConnell, *Promise*, p.35, cf. p.53, n.15.

Scientists.²⁵⁴ Further to this, McConnell claims that, “Kenyon’s personal acceptance or rejection of New Thought during his days as a student is not altogether clear, but that he was exposed to its teachings and healing practices at Emerson College is a historical certainty.”²⁵⁵ In studying Kenyon’s work, McConnell also finds what he regards as a number of linguistic and conceptual parallels between Kenyon and New Thought. He speculates that Kenyon unintentionally imbibed New Thought philosophy in the development of his own theology.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, through Kenyon, these New Thought ideas are meant to have entered the Word-faith movement.

In his chapter on Kenyon’s and the Word-faith movement’s understanding of the work of Christ, McConnell denounces what he views as its pantheistic anthropology, its ‘spiritualized’ view of Christ’s work on and after the cross, its advocacy of a ransom theory of the atonement, and its ‘cultic’ belief in human deification.²⁵⁷ He regards these views, taken together, to represent a serious departure from an ‘orthodox’ Christian understanding of salvation.²⁵⁸

McConnell’s criticisms of Word-faith origins, doctrine and practice are often accepted unquestioningly by more recent commentators.²⁵⁹ However, this assessment has not been unanimous. His claim of a strong historical link between New Thought and Kenyon is rigorously challenged.²⁶⁰ His understanding of Word-faith views concerning the atonement is also questioned.²⁶¹ This questioning is justified. Indeed, McConnell’s own view of the atonement, like those of a number of the debaters under review, is questionable. Its insistent focus on Christ’s physical death alone as the necessary and satisfactory means of atonement, apparently summarised by any

²⁵⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, p.37.

²⁵⁵ McConnell, *Promise*, p.41.

²⁵⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, p.48.

²⁵⁷ McConnell, *Promise*, ch.7.

²⁵⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120.

²⁵⁹ E.g. by MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, pp.289-290; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.331; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, pp.57-77, p.60; cf. Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.xi: “McConnell’s thesis has been widely accepted as axiomatic among Kenyon’s critics.”

²⁶⁰ See, e.g., Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp.x-xi; Lie, ‘Kenyon’, pp.71-86; McIntyre, *Kenyon*.

²⁶¹ See, e.g., Lie, ‘Theology’, pp.85-114.

biblical reference to ‘the blood’,²⁶² seems to be reductionist, and to leave the obvious question unanswered: if Christ’s psychological and ‘spiritual’ agonies were of no atoning purpose, why, if at all, did he have to endure them?

In contrast to these reservations, McConnell’s pioneering historical research into what he calls the ‘Kenyon connection’,²⁶³ and his provocative comparison of Kenyon’s teaching with that of New Thought and Christian Science, is a contribution to the debate which no student of the Word-faith movement can afford to ignore.²⁶⁴

1.6.4 Growing opposition: Andrew Brandon

In 1987 Brandon became the first British opponent of the Word-faith movement to write a book on the subject, publishing *Health & Wealth*. This brief paperback for the popular market, clearly written with a British audience in mind, tackles a broad range of concerns about Word-faith beliefs and practices, but includes a section devoted to JDS teaching, which it denounces uncompromisingly as a “sinister attack on the integrity of the gospel,” “heresy,” and “deviant.”²⁶⁵

Like Freeman’s work from within the Word-faith movement, Brandon’s arguments centre for the most part on biblical exegesis. Thus Isaiah 53:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Peter 3:18 gain particular attention, among a host of other texts. The exegetical work is brief and simple, but some will warrant attention in subsequent chapters. Brandon’s work exhibits through its endnotes a fair degree of wider reading, including Freeman’s and Farah’s books. He seems unaware of McConnell’s as yet unpublished research and makes no mention of New Thought, though he does call Kenyon Hagin’s “mentor.”²⁶⁶ Wider theological discussion is cursory. Examination of Philippians 2:7, for instance, does not exhibit knowledge of the kenotic debate, or of its relevance to JDS teaching. To be fair, Brandon does not claim to have

²⁶² McConnell, *Promise*, pp.129-130.

²⁶³ McConnell, *Promise*, ch.3.

²⁶⁴ Others who saw connections between Kenyon, Word-faith, and New Thought in the 1980s included Matta, *Born Again Jesus* (1984); Hunt, *Seduction of Christianity* (1985), *Beyond Seduction* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1987); Kinnebrew, *Doctrine* (1988).

²⁶⁵ Brandon, *Health*, pp. 119, 121, 131.

²⁶⁶ Brandon, *Health*, p.128.

conducted an academic piece of research. His work functions as a pastoral warning to the British church.

1.6.5 Growing opposition: Hank Hanegraaff

Hanegraaff published his contribution to the growing criticisms of the Word-faith movement in 1993.²⁶⁷ In his book, “an astounding best-seller”,²⁶⁸ the reader is presented with a sustained denunciation of the movement that does not seek to moderate its language. Outspokenly, sometimes pejoratively, Hanegraaff expresses deep concern about the movement’s teaching and practice.²⁶⁹ His expression of concern and distaste is not alloyed by praise of any aspects. He does, however, admit that “there are many sincere, born-again believers within the movement.”²⁷⁰

Hanegraaff does not devote much attention to the issue of the movement’s origins. He simply notes the work of Farah and McConnell in identifying a dependence of the movement on Kenyon, and of Kenyon, in turn, on New Thought.²⁷¹ However, he allocates a complete section of the book to the atonement (Part Four, ‘Atonement Atrocities’). Having opined that JDS teaching demotes God and Christ, and deifies humanity and Satan (Part Three, ‘Little Gods or Little Frauds?’), he goes on to declare that it presents the atoning work of Christ in the following terms: Christ was ‘recreated’ on or before the cross as a ‘demoniac’;²⁷² he redeemed humanity not while on the cross but while in hell; and he was reborn in hell, which was a form of

²⁶⁷ Hanegraaff, *Christianity in Crisis*; there is much overlap with Hendrik H. Hanegraaff, ‘What’s Wrong with the Faith Movement? – Part One: E. W. Kenyon and the Twelve Apostles of Another Gospel’, *Christian Research Journal*, Winter 1993, accessed 25.9.03 from www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/crj/crj-0118a.txt; Hendrik H. Hanegraaff and Erwin M. de Castro, ‘What’s Wrong with the Faith Movement? – Part Two: The Teachings of Kenneth Copeland’, *Christian Research Journal*, Spring 1993, accessed 1.10.03 from www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/crj/crj-0119a.txt.

²⁶⁸ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.268.

²⁶⁹ E.g., Hanegraaff writes of the Word-faith movement’s “pathetic attempt to reposition humanity on a level of equality with God”; with respect to an aspect of the movement’s atonement doctrine, he admits, “How such blasphemy could be tolerated in the Christian community is beyond me”; he writes: “the god of Charles Capps is but the figment of his imagination”; “Copeland then stretches this heresy to its most ridiculous extreme”; the atonement is the doctrine “the Faith teachers so blithely prostitute”; “It would be depressing enough if the madness stopped there. But it doesn’t” (*Crisis*, pp.117, 132, 134, 141, 175 [x2]).

²⁷⁰ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.41. Italics removed.

²⁷¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.331, pp.407-408, n.2.

²⁷² Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, ch.13, especially pp.155, 157.

reincarnation, enabling further incarnations of God in all Christians.²⁷³ Commenting specifically on Christ's rebirth in hell, he states, "There is zero biblical basis for this despicable doctrine."²⁷⁴

Hanegraaff's response to these perceived doctrines focuses, like others before his, on exegesis of relevant biblical texts. In fact, his exegesis is more thorough than some, and considers a broader range. He does also engage to some extent with the findings of historical theology. This will be considered in §2.4.3.

Unsurprisingly, given his forthrightness, Hanegraaff has not gained as many supporters in print as McConnell did.²⁷⁵ Two particular critics of his approach are DeArteaga, in *Quenching the Spirit*, and Spencer, in *Heresy Hunters*. DeArteaga's particular concern is that Hanegraaff has misrepresented the Word-faith movement. He has done this by assuming that "listing the worst errors of a movement is a truthful representation of that movement... It is an error easily made, but it results in caricature, not analysis, and results in destructiveness, not biblical reproof."²⁷⁶ In response, DeArteaga states that "no religious movement or class of experiences should be judged only by its extreme manifestations."²⁷⁷ DeArteaga also suggests that Hanegraaff failed to "recognize a broader orthodoxy than his own tradition."²⁷⁸ This same critique is offered, more forcibly, by Spencer.²⁷⁹ Ignoring Hanegraaff's footnote that JDS teaching's 'ransom theory' contrasts with the historical one,²⁸⁰ Spencer indicates that the ransom theory of the atonement does not fall outside the bounds of Christian 'orthodoxy'.²⁸¹ While this specific criticism fails to impress, DeArteaga's broader ones carry weight.

²⁷³ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, chs 14, 15, 16.

²⁷⁴ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.174.

²⁷⁵ Smail, Walker and Wright praise it, however, for example as "comprehensively documented and sensitive to dogmatic issues" ('Revelation Knowledge', p.63).

²⁷⁶ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.269.

²⁷⁷ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.269.

²⁷⁸ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.271.

²⁷⁹ Spencer, *Heresy Hunters*, p.99.

²⁸⁰ This is an oversight shared by DeArteaga (*Quenching the Spirit*, p.270).

²⁸¹ Spencer, *Heresy Hunters*, pp.100-104.

1.6.6 Growing opposition: Smail, Walker and Wright

In 1994 Smail, Walker and Wright published the article “‘Revelation Knowledge’ and Knowledge of Revelation: The Faith Movement and the Question of Heresy’”. Although much briefer than the other works reviewed here, this article is significant, in that it is written by recognised academicians, and it focuses largely on Word-faith teaching concerning the atonement.

No direct response to Smail, Walker and Wright’s work has appeared in print. The work is of mixed quality. Its analysis of the various strands of argument is useful, as is the survey of and appeal to early Christian thought. However, its representation of Word-faith teaching seems to be based on significant misunderstandings of its ideas. An example would be the article’s inference that “for Kenyon it is not Calvary love that redeems but the great (hitherto hidden) truths of ‘revelation knowledge’.”²⁸² Such an idea is difficult to reconcile, for instance, with Kenyon’s exposition of divine love, as expressed in the cry, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”²⁸³ This poverty of understanding may arise from an apparent lack of primary research into Word-faith literature. The article rests heavily on the research of McConnell, and less so on that of Hanegraaff, both of which it accepts unreservedly, and takes almost all its quotations of Word-faith teachers’ words from those secondary sources.²⁸⁴ This means that they may not have been read in context, and may thus have been misconstrued. It is disappointing that such senior figures should have produced work that is in some ways of a relatively low standard.

1.6.7 Growing opposition: conclusion

It has become clear through the review of this opposition to JDS teaching that debate has occurred in three main areas. First, biblical material has continued to be the focus of much attention. In general, the same texts that JDS teachers themselves refer to frequently are discussed by their opponents, who use these texts, and others, to reach different conclusions. Secondly, Kenyon’s non-biblical sources have come under

²⁸² Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.62, supported by a single quotation of Kenyon, taken from a citation in McConnell’s work.

²⁸³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.174; cf. God the Father’s reasons for creation and redemption, as explained throughout the book.

²⁸⁴ See Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, pp.62ff., nn.14, 15, 18, 25, 28, 29, 39, 42.

examination, especially through McConnell's research. His possible influence by New Thought philosophy and Christian Science has become an important part of the wider debate. Thirdly, and to much lesser extent, there has been recourse in the writing of some of these critics to historical Christian theology. The use of biblical texts, New Thought and Christian Science sources, and historical theology will be considered methodologically in chapter 2, and individual texts, sources, and theological viewpoints will be examined in later chapters.

1.7 Dissenting voices

So far, contributors to the debate have all opposed Kenyon, the Word-faith movement, or JDS teaching. However, at much the same time as McConnell's work was being published, the careful doctoral research of Dale Simmons challenged McConnell's perspective on Kenyon. Simmons is one of a number, albeit small, of dissenters. The three authors reviewed below do not defend Kenyon's JDS teaching, but they do find connections between Kenyon and 'orthodox' sources, and challenge the prevailing view concerning Kenyon's dependence on 'heterodox' ones.

1.7.1 Dissenting voices: Dale Simmons

Simmons' work, *E. W. Kenyon and the Postbellum Pursuit of Peace, Power, and Plenty*, was originally submitted to Drew University as a PhD dissertation in 1988, and eventually published as a book in 1997. His review of the Word-faith movement is relatively brief,²⁸⁵ and merely comments critically on a few practical areas of its life.

The focus of his research, however, as his title suggests, is Kenyon and his contemporary environment. Like McConnell, Simmons acknowledges Kenyon's relative dependence on concepts drawn from New Thought.²⁸⁶ However, he suggests two limitations to the significance of that dependence, and therefore important potential correctives to McConnell's thesis. The first is that New Thought was not in certain relevant aspects especially different from the Keswick and Higher Life

²⁸⁵ Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp.296-304.

²⁸⁶ In particular, Simmons recognises that Kenyon's enthusiasm for 'positive confession' owed more to New Thought than to, for instance, the Holiness movement (*Kenyon*, pp.171, 304).

movements.²⁸⁷ The other is that, in so far as these movements' features distinguished themselves from one another, Kenyon was actually more indebted to Keswick than to New Thought.²⁸⁸ Simmons seeks to demonstrate this in two ways. First, historically, he shows that Kenyon was exposed to Higher Life as much as, if not more than, New Thought:

Indeed, while some have concluded that Kenyon (via his attendance at Emerson College) was brought directly and decisively under the influence of New Thought, it could just as easily be argued that Kenyon's brief stay at Emerson initiated (or reinforced) his "connection" with the Higher Christian Life movement (with which the school's founder and president, Charles Wesley Emerson, was also deeply involved).²⁸⁹

Secondly, conceptually, he looks for parallels in Kenyon's writing with each of these groups. Although he finds them with both, parallels with Higher Life predominate.²⁹⁰

The quality of Simmons' research has been appreciated by, among others, Bowman and McIntyre.²⁹¹ Combined with the clarity of his presentation, it aids understanding of Kenyon's historical and sociological environment. As such, Simmons' case offers an important perspective on Kenyon and his world. However, Simmons may be overstating McConnell's case for the connection between Kenyon and New Thought in order to counter-argue it. McConnell's claim is that Kenyon's theology was syncretistic, rather than wholly dominated by New Thought. Also, Simmons may be underplaying the differences between New Thought and Higher Life, as Bowman claims.²⁹² Nevertheless, Simmons for the first time highlights both Kenyon's genuine indebtedness to the 'orthodox' Christian Higher Life movement emanating from the Keswick conventions, and similarities between this and New Thought.

²⁸⁷ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.xiii. Examples: "both Keswick and New Thought held union with God to be the goal of one's life" (p.87); "Like New Thought, the Higher Life movement focused on changing the individual, rather than institutions" (p.95); "[J]ust as with New Thought, Higher Christian Life teachers point out that even though faith must be expressed in present tense terms, it may be some time before one 'enters into the experimental enjoyment' of that which one has claimed" (p.158).

²⁸⁸ Simmons, *Kenyon*, e.g. pp.xi; 304.

²⁸⁹ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.305.

²⁹⁰ Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp.164-165 serve as an example: "Kenyon's elaborate teachings on the origin and operation of demons are in marked contrast to the virtual denial of evil in New Thought and place him closer to the Higher Life and Pentecostal movements of his day."

²⁹¹ Bowman, *Controversy*, e.g. p.243; McIntyre, *Kenyon*, e.g. p.iv.

²⁹² Bowman, *Controversy*, e.g. p.243.

1.7.2 Dissenting voices: William DeArteaga

One debater who positively seeks to rehabilitate Kenyon is William DeArteaga. His book, *Quenching the Spirit*, offers a critique of, particularly, McConnell's, Hunt's and Hanegraaff's works about the Word-faith movement. DeArteaga offers some mild rebukes of his own against the movement,²⁹³ but equally he is prepared to praise Hagin,²⁹⁴ and to defend Copeland against certain criticisms of Hanegraaff.²⁹⁵ He devotes far more pages, however, to Kenyon, whom he views as an important positive influence not just on the movement but on wider charismatic and "mainstream" Christianity.²⁹⁶ With respect to the impact of New Thought on Kenyon, he accepts that this occurred,²⁹⁷ but argues that Kenyon 'filtered' these ideas so as to maintain only those in line with his view of biblical teaching. In this way, he made a positive contribution in drawing Christianity away from cessationism and its philosophical underpinnings.²⁹⁸

When discussing Kenyon's atonement theology, and particularly his portrayal of Christ's descent into hell, DeArteaga writes:

First, although Kenyon's theory was speculative and probably wrong, it does not deserve to be labeled as heresy. His interpretation was based on a biblically orthodox, although no longer popular, theory of the atonement. Secondly, Kenyon's interpretation of Christ in hell merely expands what was suggested by John Calvin, the father of Reformed orthodoxy. Thus McConnell (and Hanegraaff) have made a heretical mountain out of a doctrinal molehill.²⁹⁹

DeArteaga then proceeds to discuss the ransom theory, and Calvin's commentary on the Apostles' Creed, concluding with respect to the latter: "To call Kenyon's theory heretical and dangerous is to say the same of Calvin's theory."³⁰⁰ Such a verdict overlooks vast differences between Calvinism and JDS doctrine (see chapters 4, 5 and 6). Overall, DeArteaga makes some useful criticisms, especially of Hanegraaff, but his own theological analysis is superficial and relatively uninformed.

²⁹³ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, pp.223, 225-227.

²⁹⁴ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.244; cf. p.231.

²⁹⁵ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, pp.271-272.

²⁹⁶ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.175; cf. pp.223, 243.

²⁹⁷ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.214.

²⁹⁸ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, e.g. p.175.

²⁹⁹ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.240.

³⁰⁰ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, p.243.

1.7.3 Dissenting voices: Geir Lie

Another defender of Kenyon is Geir Lie. The English translation of his revised 1994 master's thesis for the Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology was later published as a book under the same title, *E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?*³⁰¹ Lengthy sections of its contents have also appeared almost verbatim, with small additions, in two articles, 'E. W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister?' and 'The Theology of E. W. Kenyon: Plain Heresy or Within the Boundaries of Pentecostal-Charismatic "Orthodoxy?"' The thesis, which is a response to the work of McConnell, is primarily a historical analysis, but with theological observations. The historical enquiry, some of which is quite dependent on that of Simmons, goes somewhat beyond Simmons' conclusions: "Kenyon's historical roots seem solidly planted in an 'evangelical' tradition, namely mysticism, Brethrenism and Higher Life/Faith-Cure" and "Kenyon might just as well have derived his theology from Higher Life sources as from cultic ones."³⁰²

The theological sections are more than willing to criticise Kenyon's thinking, not least his ideas regarding atonement. Thus he can write: "It is impossible to refute all criticism of Kenyon's teachings on the spiritual death of Christ."³⁰³ Nonetheless, he critiques McConnell's observations, indicating ways in which it is necessary to negate some of the implications created by them. These observations and criticisms will be discussed in later chapters.

1.7.4 Dissenting voices: conclusion

Not everyone has accepted McConnell's thesis that Kenyon imbibed New Thought ideas to the detriment of his 'orthodoxy'. DeArteaga is the most fulsome in his defence of Kenyon, but Simmons and Lie offer more important conclusions, that Kenyon was on balance more influenced by Higher Life than by New Thought. With respect to JDS teaching itself, notwithstanding DeArteaga's unconvincing suggestion that it is nothing more than a doctrinal 'molehill', Lie opens the way for a balanced

³⁰¹ Oslo: Refleks publishing, 2004.

³⁰² Lie, 'Kenyon', p.81.

³⁰³ Lie, *Kenyon*, p.93, also in 'Theology', p.99.

discussion that is willing to part company with Kenyon's view while not merely rejecting it as 'heresy'.

1.8 Mediating positions

Moving to the twenty-first century, more recent works offer a viewpoint that is not as antagonistic towards either the Word-faith movement or JDS teaching as some of the earlier contributions were, while still capable of incisive criticism.

1.8.1 Mediating positions: Robert Bowman

Bowman published *The Word-Faith Controversy* in 2001. This useful book displays a high degree of primary research, and employs more nuanced discussion than that of, for example, Hanegraaff, seeking to present Word-faith doctrines in a manner that avoids the danger of parodying them.³⁰⁴

Like others before him, Bowman explores the origins of the movement. First, he re-opens the question about the link between it and Kenyon. He believes that McConnell and his dependants overstated this relationship. While they referred to Kenyon as the 'father' of the movement, he prefers 'grandfather'. Later, from a differing perspective, Bowman presents Kenyon as merely one of "four 'fathers' of the Word-Faith movement."³⁰⁵ The other three are, he claims, William Branham, Oral Roberts, and Kenneth Hagin. While he describes William Branham and the Latter Rain movement at some length, he does not actually state what doctrines or practices he regards Branham as having contributed to the Word-faith movement, thus weakening his claim. Similarly, though he gives attention to Oral Roberts and his ministry in 'Pentecostal Televangelism', it is unclear how much, if any, of the thought and practice concerning faith and healing that Roberts disseminated would not earlier have been espoused by Kenyon.³⁰⁶ Only in the case of Hagin does Bowman present a convincing case that Kenyon's ideas have been substantially added to: Hagin has made the movement explicitly Pentecostal in its doctrine insofar as he introduced and promulgated a classical Pentecostal understanding of baptism in

³⁰⁴ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.18-19, 30.

³⁰⁵ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.36, 38, 124, 86 (quoted).

³⁰⁶ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.86-91.

the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues.³⁰⁷ This apart, given the paucity of evidence offered by Bowman that the movement differs substantially in its doctrine from that of Kenyon, Bowman is surely right to have concluded earlier in his work that, although “a number of important figures were responsible for bringing about the Word-Faith movement and its theology”, “the most important by far is indeed Kenyon.”³⁰⁸

In considering Kenyon’s own influences, he agrees with Simmons that Kenyon was more indebted to Higher Life than to New Thought, but actually wishes to make this point more forcibly, accurately stating that Simmons underestimates the differences between these two groups.³⁰⁹ Like Simmons, he interacts with McConnell, but also seems at times to exaggerate McConnell’s thesis to critique it.³¹⁰

After exploring the Word-faith movement’s origins, Bowman, like McConnell and Hanegraaff, devotes several chapters of his book to discussing the various main Word-faith doctrinal distinctives. His chapters on the atonement respond with biblical exegesis much as his predecessors’ do. A particular contribution, though, is his careful analysis at each stage of what JDS teaching does *and does not claim*, and what of the doctrine he agrees with, as well as what he differs from.³¹¹

This approach is helpful in creating a balanced discussion, though his criticisms remain trenchant. Among other observations, he declares that the belief that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ is ‘heretical’.³¹² His conclusions about the movement as a whole are that it is “suborthodox and aberrant”, containing some ‘heretical’ teachers, but that many of its participants are ‘orthodox’ if unsophisticated, and that it should not be “described as cultic.”³¹³

³⁰⁷ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.94; cf. Jackson, ‘Prosperity Theology’, p.16.

³⁰⁸ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.36.

³⁰⁹ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.47, 54-55, 58, 66-67, 82, 243.

³¹⁰ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.53-54, 66.

³¹¹ Bowman, *Controversy*, chs.9-13, e.g. pp.129, 163.

³¹² Bowman, *Controversy*, p.176.

³¹³ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.227-228.

1.8.2 Mediating positions: Andrew Perriman

‘Balanced’ is also an apt description of the more recent *Faith, Health & Prosperity*, edited by Perriman and published in 2003. For instance, this work seeks to employ conciliatory aims and respectful principles in engaging in a debate with the Word-faith movement.³¹⁴ Thus the book tries to investigate the movement “in a way which purposefully opens a path towards constructive dialogue and reconciliation.”³¹⁵ Similarly, while Perriman continues the stance of earlier debaters that the movement contains significant errors in its doctrine and practice,³¹⁶ nevertheless he repeatedly maintains that evangelicalism may have failings that Word-faith distinctives highlight or mirror,³¹⁷ and that evangelicalism might indeed be able to learn from certain Word-faith emphases.³¹⁸

Perriman’s overall method does not differ markedly from that of Bowman: he discusses issues of origins before tackling each Word-faith distinctive, offering a considered response which draws upon biblical exegesis and, sometimes, makes recourse to historical theology. He does, however, develop his ideas beyond Bowman’s in offering a more detailed description of the movement’s world-wide growth and influence, and, particularly, in further considering important issues concerning the hermeneutics employed in Word-faith Bible reading, and the typical genre of Word-faith teaching, which might at times contain “flamboyant and somewhat reckless rhetoric”.³¹⁹

Perriman concludes his chapter about the movement’s origins: “Bowman seems close to the mark when he concludes that it was Hagin’s peculiar synthesis of Kenyon’s teaching with Latter Rain Pentecostalism that produced the modern Word

³¹⁴ Perriman, *Faith*, ‘A Fair Trial’, pp.15-18. It might be construed, however, that the term ‘trial’ is itself prejudicial.

³¹⁵ Perriman, *Faith*, p.15. Cf. the book’s ‘Conclusions’, subtitled: ‘Word of Faith and Evangelical Unity’ (pp.209-235).

³¹⁶ Perriman, *Faith*, chs 6-12, and ‘Conclusions’.

³¹⁷ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.17, 81, 103.

³¹⁸ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.101, 102 (relevant to this study): “Copeland uses the language and imagery of human production and commerce to say something quite profound about the atonement.”

³¹⁹ Perriman, *Faith*, chs 1, 6, quotation from p.101. For discussion about the rhetoric employed by Copeland, see pp.95-97 of John O. Thompson, ‘Voice Genres: The Case of Televangelical Language’, pp.88-99 in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *The Nature of Religious Language: A Colloquium* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

of Faith movement.”³²⁰ Perriman seeks, with some success, to offer a fuller explanation than Bowman about the influence of the Latter Rain movement on the movement. Referring to the ministries of Oral Roberts and A. A. Allen, Perriman posits that teaching and practice concerning prosperity and fund-raising developed during the 1950s and were apparently drawn by Hagin into his overall scheme of ministry.³²¹ However, he does not deny the significant influence of Kenyon on distinctive Word-faith doctrine. In turn, he recognises that Kenyon may have been influenced by both New Thought and Higher Life, two movements that had at least some beliefs and practices in common: “These two currents were not entirely distinct. They intermingled at places; they shared common interests; they exchanged terminology and arguments. Kenyon was perhaps the best example of that confluence.”³²²

In his chapter on Word-faith teaching about the work of Christ, Perriman offers an excellent nuanced discussion, which allows some degree of agreement with it, recognises a plurality of perspectives in biblical theology, and raises issues of later theological debate such as kenoticism.³²³ Overall, it has departed markedly from the unyielding polemics of such earlier critics as Hanegraaff. Nevertheless, it still concludes that JDS teaching is a “peculiar atonement mythology”.³²⁴

1.8.3 Mediating positions: conclusion

Bowman and Perriman are both more willing than earlier critics to listen respectfully to JDS teaching, and to recognise agreement where such exists. They also exemplify a balanced approach to the question of Kenyon’s contemporary sources and influences. While each remains a bewildered opponent of JDS teaching, awareness of ‘orthodox’ elements in Kenyon’s background, and at least some ability to indulge in nuanced theological discussion enables each commentator to avoid occupying an extreme stance.

³²⁰ Perriman, *Faith*, p.77.

³²¹ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.63-65.

³²² Perriman, *Faith*, pp.74-76, quoting p.76.

³²³ Perriman, *Faith*, e.g. pp.106-108.

³²⁴ Perriman, *Faith*, p.114.

1.9 Chapter conclusions

1.9.1 Summary

JDS teaching has its spiritual ‘home’ in the Word-faith movement, which finds its origins in the marriage, at Hagin’s hands, of classical Pentecostalism, the ‘revivalism’ of Oral Roberts, and the distinctive teaching of Kenyon. While it remains typically Pentecostal in many of its beliefs, the movement’s views on healing, prosperity and atonement, among others, are distinctive and controversial. Its understanding of the atonement, for instance, includes the highly controversial JDS teaching, labelled by many commentators as ‘heresy’. The Word-faith movement, although amorphous, is highly influential among Pentecostal and charismatic Christians, for instance through its use of modern communications media. Given that JDS teaching is controversial, and the movement from which it emanates is so influential, research into the teaching is warranted.

This research project focuses on the views of three foremost JDS teachers: Kenyon, Hagin, and Copeland. Kenyon developed JDS teaching in its present form, and it became part of Word-faith teaching through Hagin’s plagiarism of Kenyon. Copeland, perhaps the most influential living leader of the Word-faith movement, continues to teach JDS doctrine today. While, of the three, Hagin offers the least immoderate account of Christ’s death, the three agree that in his ‘spiritual death’ Jesus was separated from God, partook of a sinful satanic nature, and became Satan’s prey. Other JDS teachers offer similar accounts.

JDS teaching has sparked considerable debate among a number of opponents and other researchers. While one opponent of JDS teaching was himself a prominent Word-faith teacher, other debaters come from outside the movement. In the USA, many are charismatic, ORU being a centre of debate, or evangelicals from ‘cult-watch’ ministries. A number of British commentators have also participated in the discussion. A survey of individual contributions to the debate demonstrates a rising tide of opposition on both sides of the Atlantic, a smaller number of dissenting voices, and, more recently, some mediating positions.

The discussion to which JDS teaching has given rise has centred on two areas. First, certain biblical texts, studied by JDS teachers themselves, have in turn gained the attention of their critics. Secondly, Kenyon's non-biblical sources have been a focus of study. In particular, commentators have disagreed about the extent to which he was influenced by New Thought and Christian Science, or Higher Life and Faith Cure. The historical evidence suggests he was more influenced by the latter groups, while indicating commonalities between these and New Thought.

1.9.2 Implications

It is clear that the research which this project seeks to undertake is justified (and there is also reason to conclude that a Pentecostal is suitably positioned to undertake it). It is not the case that all the 'ground has already been covered'. No research at doctoral level has been pursued into JDS teaching. Also, the debate still exhibits a number of important gaps methodologically. The most ground has been covered in 'Bible study'. Most debaters are evangelical; all honour the Christian scriptures. Hence, certain texts have been considered in some detail. However, even here more needs to be said. A tendency on both sides of the debate, for and against JDS teaching, has been to consider in detail small texts isolated from their contexts, social and literary. There is thus room for a study which still considers individual texts with care, but which also views the overall perspectives of biblical authors, and indeed of the canon. The next chapter will contain a section (§2.4) that considers in detail this matter of the place of the Bible, both in the debate so far conducted, and in the research project here being undertaken.

A second area where, methodologically, work still clearly needs to be done concerns the question of Kenyon's contemporary sources and influences. While it has become reasonably clear that Kenyon was closer in hue to Higher Life and Faith Cure than he was to New Thought and Christian Science, research still needs to be conducted which applies this observation to the individual doctrines that he taught and introduced to the Word-faith movement. JDS teaching offers itself as a suitable example of this need and opportunity. Both arenas of Kenyon's possible background need to be searched to see if his JDS doctrine, or its seeds, lay already in either one.

Methodological considerations about this task will occupy a further section in chapter 2 (§2.5).

However, the greatest gap in the debate so far is the lack of consideration of historical theology. Only a few debaters have given even scant attention to the thinking of Christians during the near two millennia between the Bible's completion and this debate's inception. A massive amount of careful thought has gone into the subject of the atonement. Passive ignorance, or a deliberate ignoring, of this process and its findings, has led to a naïvety among some of the debaters and their positions. This research project will not ignore the treasure trove of historical Christian thought. A section in the following chapter will set out a justification for this approach, and suggest a method for engaging appropriately with theological sources (§2.6).

1.9.3 Key observations

The influential and controversial Word-faith movement has been the subject of heated discussion in wider Christian circles since the 1970s. Critics and defenders of the movement have included within their gaze a study of its teaching that Jesus 'died spiritually' (JDS). However, they have not highlighted this aspect of Word-faith doctrine to a greater extent than any other. In particular, no doctoral research into JDS teaching has been conducted. The present project is thus an important contribution to the debate.

Within this debate, one contribution stands out as key: that of Dan McConnell. McConnell's influential opinion, that the Word-faith movement has gained some of its doctrinal distinctives, via Kenyon, from the 'heterodox' New Thought and Christian Science movements, has however been challenged by more recent researchers. Kenyon was probably more influenced by the 'orthodox' Higher Life and Faith Cure movements (which, anyway, shared identifiable common ground with the 'heterodox' groups). Kenyon, and therefore the Word-faith movement, cannot simply be dismissed as 'heretical' on the basis of McConnell's work.

2 Scope, criteria and methods

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has the primary aim of indicating and justifying the scope, criteria and methods this thesis will employ in its theological appraisal of JDS teaching. In the process, and by way of comparison, it also aims to demonstrate what the criteria and methods are of those who have already propounded or debated JDS teaching. This comparison will clarify ways in which this thesis both furthers the employment of criteria and methods already in use, and introduces some that have so far been neglected.

The chapter is arranged in six sections. First, the scope and limits of the research are briefly set out (§2.2). Thereafter, the three criteria which the project will employ for evaluating JDS doctrine are presented (§2.3). Each of these raises methodological concerns, and the following three sections discuss these with respect to each criterion: faithfulness to the biblical witness (§2.4); influence on Kenyon of his various possible contemporary sources (§2.5); and conformity to the major conclusions of historical theology (§2.6). In each of these three sections, presentation of this thesis' methods will be preceded by discussion of the methods employed by JDS teachers, and those who have debated their doctrine. Finally, §2.7 will conclude the chapter.

2.2 Scope and limits

The appraisal which this thesis offers is theological, not social. No attempt will be made to offer a significant contribution to the social study of the Word-faith movement. It does not seek to cover similar ground, for example, to that discussed by Harrison in his *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion*. It is much more similar in scope, though not in subject matter, to Kinnebrew's *The Charismatic Doctrine of Positive Confession: A Historical, Exegetical, and Theological Critique*. In other words, by studying the teaching concerning Christ's 'inner' suffering in his dying and death that was prevalent among Kenyon's putative influences, both 'orthodox' and 'heterodox', and by setting out both how Kenyon understood Christ's 'spiritual death' and how Hagin

and Copeland have developed that understanding, the thesis builds a picture of the historical evolution of JDS teaching to the present day. Furthermore, by examining the extent to which JDS teaching stands within or departs from, on the one hand, traditional ‘orthodox’ Christian formulations found in and built on the Bible and the creeds, and on the other hand, the thinking of New Thought and Christian Science, this project, to quote Kinnebrew, offers a ‘historical, exegetical and theological critique’ of JDS doctrine.

An aim of this thesis, in appraising JDS doctrine theologically, is to consider the doctrine as one possible answer to the question, “What happened ‘inwardly’ to Jesus in his dying and death?” It is not the intention of this thesis to evaluate JDS teaching more broadly as a theory of the atonement, nor indeed to examine the idea of atonement itself. Neither is it an aim to consider penal substitution, of which JDS teaching is clearly a form. Therefore, similarly, the project’s conclusions will offer their own contribution towards answering the question concerning Christ’s dying and death, but will not attempt to develop a theory of atonement, substitutionary or otherwise.

In order to prevent the ramifications of the project’s enquiry from spreading too far, it is necessary to make certain theological assumptions. For the purposes of discussion, then, it is assumed that God is the all-powerful trinitarian creator, and is loving and just in his¹ dealings with creation. It is also assumed that humans are in need of salvation from their sin, and that God wants to offer this salvation to them. Christ, understood in traditional incarnational terms, is God’s answer to a world in need. Furthermore, the existence of Satan, or the devil, is assumed, as it is by JDS teachers, and by the main contributors to JDS debate. It is further assumed that Satan is personal, evil, at enmity with humanity, and in some way defeated (at least proleptically) through God’s work in Christ.

¹ The use of the masculine pronoun, here and elsewhere, though kept to a minimum, is in line with Christ’s designation of God as his ‘Father’. It is not intended to indicate that God is male. Similarly, use of a masculine pronoun with reference to Satan is not meant to imply gender.

2.3 Criteria

The debate concerning JDS teaching centres on its ‘truth claim’: the declaration that this is what really happened to Jesus. For JDS teachers themselves, the claim rests wholly upon their belief that this is what the Bible teaches. Their opponents refer to a wider range of evaluative criteria. The Bible continues to enjoy central place, but consideration is also given to the possible influence of New Thought and Christian Science on Kenyon and his teaching, including JDS doctrine, and, occasionally, to historical theological issues. This thesis will employ all three. It will consider: faithfulness to the Christian scriptures; conformity with or departure from Kenyon’s various probable contemporary sources; and conformity with or departure from historic Christian formulations concerning Christ’s death.

2.3.1 The criterion of the Bible

The sole criterion offered by JDS teachers for ascertaining the truthfulness of the claim that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ is its faithfulness to scriptural teaching. They believe JDS teaching is true, because they believe it is ‘biblical’. In other words they believe that the Christian scriptures declare Jesus to have ‘died spiritually’, and that their understanding of what that death involved is also borne out by scriptural material. In similar vein, JDS teaching’s opponents have questioned this truth claim primarily by returning to the same scriptures and declaring on that same basis that the claim is false: Jesus did *not* ‘die spiritually’, for this is *not* what the Bible teaches. This research project will continue to pursue this line of enquiry, and will thus interact in some detail with these scriptures. A first criterion against which this appraisal of JDS doctrine will be carried out is thus the degree of its conformity with or departure from scriptural testimony. §2.4 will discuss the methodological implications of this criterion.

2.3.2 The criterion of Kenyon’s contemporary influences

It emerged in §§1.6.3; 1.7.1; 1.7.3 that, for many debaters about JDS doctrine, biblical content is not the only criterion against which to judge it. Some also pursue a more recent historical enquiry, seeking to gauge the extent to which Kenyon, in introducing the doctrine to the church, was drawing upon ideas prevalent in his day

in New Thought philosophy and Christian Science. The thinking here is clear. In the minds of these opponents, New Thought evidently departs to some extent from scriptural teaching, and is therefore to this extent false. If JDS teaching can be demonstrated to resemble New Thought in contrast to biblical teaching, then it too is false.

There is merit in this line of enquiry. Doctrinal distinctions between New Thought and, on the one hand, biblical ideas and, on the other hand, nineteenth and twentieth century western 'orthodox' Christianity are not difficult to find, despite the nebulousness of New Thought. Where contrasts can be demonstrated, then efforts to find which 'camp' Kenyon was in are not futile. If in some respects he resembled New Thought at the expense of 'orthodoxy', then evangelical and Pentecostal Christians today have reason to be wary of his teaching at those points. Thus this thesis will examine the extent to which JDS teaching's roots can be demonstrated in New Thought and Christian Science.

Again, however, these observations raise methodological questions. One is whether a primarily historical or theological enquiry is appropriate. As the question about the extent to which Kenyon was affected by New Thought while at Emerson College remains an open one, it might be deduced that further historical research is in order. However, the research already conducted by McConnell and Simmons especially indicates that this phase of Kenyon's life has already been closely examined, and further clarity is unlikely. It is best to concede that Kenyon *might* have been influenced by New Thought, even allowing for his repeated negative statements about the movement.² Therefore, more benefit will come from comparing his writing with possibly influential New Thought and Christian Science writers, on the subject of Christ's death and surrounding issues, to see whether parallels can be found that suggest in some way that he was dependent on them.

Clearly, this process calls for a considered selection of New Thought and Christian Science sources to research. §2.5.1 will be devoted to this discussion. However, there

² Kenyon, *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.17; *Jesus the Healer*, p.77; *Wonderful Name*, pp.69-70.

is also the need to compare these New Thought sources with more ‘orthodox’ sources that Kenyon might also have drawn from. It has already been shown in §§1.7.1; 1.7.3 that some dissenting voices regarded Kenyon as much closer to the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements of his day. These sources will also need to be researched to find out if the seeds of JDS teaching lay there. Thus §2.5.2 will discuss the selection of Higher Life and Faith Cure sources. Only a comparison of both groups will allow a reasonable degree of certainty about which may have influenced Kenyon the most.

2.3.3 The criterion of historical theology

Not many of the debaters reviewed in §§1.6-1.8 have engaged to any serious extent with the broader sweep of two thousand years of Christian thought about the atonement in general and Christ’s death in particular. This thesis will stand in contrast to them by doing so. Thus a third criterion is being more fully introduced into the debate: the extent to which JDS teaching coheres with or departs from historic Christian formulations about Christ’s death.

This contrasting method needs to be justified, and will be in §2.6.4. First, however, the lack of interaction with historical theology in the debate so far, and reasons for this lack, will be examined in §§2.6.1 to 2.6.3 so as to provide a contrasting context against which the justification can be offered.

2.4 Conformity with the biblical witness

While the importance of the scriptures for developing or evaluating JDS teaching is usually implicit, it is nevertheless strikingly clear. Indeed, some participants in the JDS debate make overt appeals to the scriptures’ primacy or inspiration.³ A comparison between JDS teaching and biblical material will furnish this study with a standard of evaluation that all participants would respect, and that would be regarded as important both throughout Pentecostalism and within the wider church. Nevertheless, this comparison does raise methodological concerns. Questions arise

³ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.147, 220; *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, ch.2: *Presence*, p.138; Hagin, *What To Do*, ch.2; *El Shaddai*, p.34; *Human Spirit*, ch.IV; Copeland, ‘Bridge’, p.3; Robert M. Bowman, Jr. [*sic*], *Orthodoxy and Heresy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), pp.59-60, 64.

about: selection of texts (§2.4.1); use of translations (§2.4.2); and interpretation of texts (§2.4.3)

2.4.1 Selection of texts

§§1.4.5-1.4.7 briefly introduced some of the main texts that JDS teachers refer to in developing their distinctive view of Christ's death. They include particularly: Genesis 2:17; Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 12:40; 27:46; Mark 15:34; John 3:14; Acts 2:24-31; Romans 10:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21 (often); Ephesians 2:1; 4:9; Colossians 2:15 (often); 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Timothy 3:16; and 1 Peter 3:18. References in Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's work to these and other texts are discussed, as appropriate, throughout the rest of the thesis. It is clear from the contexts in which these texts appear that they are chosen on the basis of perceived relevance to the topic, and that those which receive more attention than others do so because they are considered to be especially relevant or important. It is also clear from perusing the list that the Pauline corpus (undisputed and disputed) receives disproportionate attention in terms of its length. In fact, Kenyon consistently stated his prioritisation of Paul's writings over, say, the gospels.⁴ For instance, he wrote:

The four gospels are written in the realm of Sense Knowledge. There is no inkling of the Revelation that God was to give to Paul in any of them. They saw the miracles. They saw the man Jesus arrested. They saw Him tried in court. They heard the sentence pronounced on Him. They saw Him go with the soldiers... they saw Him die. But they could not see the tragedy in His soul. They could not see His spirit made sin. They could not see the spirit leave the body and go to the place of suffering under the dominion of the Black Prince. They could not see Him as He suffered until the claims of Justice were met. They could not see Him when He was justified, having paid the penalty of man's transgression. They could not see Him when He became the First Born out of Death. This was the birth of His spirit out of spiritual death. They could not see Him when He met the adversary, conquered him, and stripped him of authority. They could not see Him until He came back to his body and imparted Immortality to it, bursting the bars of death and standing before them absolute Master of Satan, death, and the grave.⁵

Similarly, Copeland writes:

Quite frankly, you can't find out what happened [at Calvary] strictly by reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. For one thing, those books contain very little information about the Crucifixion. And for another thing, the men who wrote them had viewed it from a natural perspective. They didn't understand it

⁴ E.g. Kenyon, *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, pp.26, 37; *What Happened*, pp.116, 118. The gospels, however, were not without value (*Wonderful Name*, p.14).

⁵ Kenyon, *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, pp.37-38.

themselves at the time because it was a mystery hidden in God (see 1 Corinthians 2:6-8).⁶

Kenyon's and Copeland's stated reasoning is clear: the evangelists wrote what they had experienced naturally, while Paul wrote what he had gained by revelation. However, another or further explanation might be an embarrassment over the silence of the gospels concerning Easter Saturday, given the JDS belief that the atoning suffering of Christ continued, in hell, during that day. If important atoning work continued during that time, and such a high proportion of the New Testament is silent about it, an explanation must be sought, or perhaps created, for that silence.

So Kenyon and Copeland at least promote the Pauline corpus over the gospels for their own reasons, stated or unstated. However, there is no concession in their writing that within one genre there might be a plurality of perspectives. For example, there is no discussion of the possibility that an individual author might in some respects be distinctive rather than simply conforming to a majority view. This omission is obviously not driven by a 'dictation theory' of biblical inspiration, for if it was, Copeland could not have written, seemingly dismissively, of the evangelists' writing "from a natural perspective." However, the scriptures are 'flattened' thereby to become a univocal single document. This means that a single text performs, it seems, as important a function as a sustained witness. It is, literally, a 'proof text'. "Genesis 1:1 (or whichever text is under examination) says..." becomes effectively synonymous with "The Bible says..." Examples of this tendency quickly emerge in §3.2, as soon as textual exegesis is examined.

Whatever one is to make of JDS teaching's textual choices and uses, Perriman identifies in Word-faith teaching a "selective and tendentious use of Scripture."⁷ Taking these two claims in turn, *all* participants in the debate are of course necessarily selective in their discussion of scriptures. Notwithstanding Bowman's assertion that "our understanding of the gospel should be shaped by the entire Bible",⁸ critics of JDS teaching are as selective as its proponents. The critics'

⁶ Kenneth Copeland, 'The Great Exchange', pp.4-8, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.2 (February 1996), p.5.

⁷ Perriman, *Faith*, p.82.

⁸ Bowman, *Orthodoxy*, p.64.

selection is naturally governed both by the limits of the topics discussed, and by JDS teaching's selectivity, which has already placed certain texts in focus, so that critics must respond. This thesis cannot escape following previous contributions by referring to such passages as the ones listed above, among others.

However, this project will also attempt to offer a broader biblical perspective than that gained by the atomistic exegesis of texts that are only one or a few verses long. Individual authors' views of certain subjects will be built up from the contributions of their various writings on the subjects, and at times these authors' ideas will be combined to give a 'canonical' view of a subject. Examples include Luke's view of hades, and the New Testament understanding of God the Father's and Christ the Son's unity in the work of atonement (examples in §§6.4.3; 4.6.3 respectively).

What is perhaps of greater concern is Perriman's claim that the Word-faith movement's use of scriptures is 'tendentious'. This is a much more difficult claim to analyse and quantify. Equally, of course, JDS teaching's critics may be tendentious at times. Careful attention will need to be paid during the discussion not only to what passages debaters discuss, but also to which relevant ones, if any, they inappropriately ignore.⁹ Examples of material newly drawn into the discussion include the mainly Johannine testimony that Satan played a part in Christ's sufferings leading up to and including the cross (this example in §6.5.1).

2.4.2 Use of translations

JDS proponents do not interact in detail with biblical texts in their original languages. Occasionally, individual Hebrew and Greek words are discussed.¹⁰ Overall, however, there is no evidence that any of them has a working knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. This makes them vulnerable to criticism. An example is the lengthy discussion in Freeman's *JDS Heresy* of Isaiah 53:9 and its Hebrew plural of 'in his death', which Kenyon had taken to refer to Christ's physical and spiritual

⁹ The suggestion is not intended that this thesis itself can be guaranteed to be free from 'tendency'.

¹⁰ E.g. Kenyon, *Presence*, pp.68, 94; Hagin, *Plans*, p.90; Kenneth Copeland, 'The Might and Ministry of the Holy Spirit in You', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.4 (April 1996), p.5.

‘deaths’. Freeman judges accurately that JDS teaching simply misunderstands the use of the Hebrew plural (see discussion in §§1.6.1; 3.2.3).

The problem of ignorance of the original languages is somewhat mitigated by the common habit among JDS teachers of listing a biblical passage in several different translations, no doubt with the belief that different translations will suggest nuances of the original language’s meaning.¹¹ Indeed, the movement’s flexibility with translations means that reliance on any one rarely accounts for questionable exegesis. An example, however, is Kenyon’s claim that Christ must have been condemned spiritually, for he was later ‘justified in spirit’ (1 Timothy 3:16).¹² The weakness of this translation is considered in §3.2.3.

This thesis will note the wording of published English translations where appropriate. However, use will be made of the original languages and the author’s own translations. Where reliance on published translations might give rise to misleading understanding, recourse to the original languages will help to prevent this.

2.4.3 Interpretation of texts

Turning now to interpretation, it is clear that on both sides, debaters assume that the scriptures they study have fixed meanings intended by their human (and divine) authors, and that these fixed meanings are accessible by reasonable study. In other words, they engage in the task of exegesis, seeking to draw out *the* meaning, rather than offer *a* reading.

Among JDS teachers, it is rare for any statement to be offered concerning the hermeneutics guiding this exegetical task. However, Billheimer probably speaks for the whole of JDS teaching when he writes: “One rule of Biblical interpretation holds that the Word must be accepted literally unless it is clearly figurative or

¹¹ E.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *A Fresh Anointing* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1989), p.38; *Name*, pp.98-99; Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

¹² Kenyon, *Father*, p.138.

symbolical.”¹³ What this ‘literal acceptance’ might be is not defined, and there is the danger that appeal to the ‘literal sense’ of texts might be guilty of the ‘naïve realism’ that sees a “perfect match between language and world.”¹⁴

It is not surprising that within the debate about the Word-faith movement, criticisms of its reading of scripture are common. They are often brief and general: Brandon indicates that the movement isolates passages and indulges in ‘proof-texting’; Dal Bello regards Hagin’s use of Psalm 22 as ‘eisegesis’ rather than exegesis; and Hanegraaff and de Castro claim that Copeland sometimes misses grammatical rules, misunderstands important biblical words, and ignores textual context.¹⁵ Perriman, however, is more detailed. He regards the movement’s handling of scripture as ‘utilitarian’, and, as he mentions more often, ‘contractual’, by which he means that they regard the scriptures as merely comprising “a set of promises, rules, laws, conditions, etc., which must be appropriated and activated by the believer” and “the univocal clauses and conditions of a legal contract.” Furthermore, Perriman notes that they fail to take due account of how such factors as genre, literary style and rhetorical purpose of passages ought to affect the ways they are understood.¹⁶

Certainly, such general criticisms are applicable to JDS teaching in particular. Several problems concerning its use of scripture are evident. First, single verses are sometimes isolated from their original context and considered atomistically.¹⁷ An example is 1 Thessalonians 5:23, in which the apparently trichotomous formula of ‘spirit, soul and body’ is not considered with due regard to Paul’s emphasis in the verse, the letter, or his corpus (see discussion in §3.5.4). Secondly, a superficial approach to the words themselves is employed, no consideration being given, for instance, to the social location or personality of the human author, or the genre of the

¹³ Billheimer, *Throne*, p.39.

¹⁴ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), p.48.

¹⁵ Brandon, *Health*, pp.21, 24; Moreno dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2 (1994), accessed 25.9.03 from www.banner.org.uk/wof/moreno2.html, p.2 when printed on A4; Hanegraaff and de Castro, ‘What’s Wrong with the Faith Movement? – Part Two’, p.10 when printed on A4.

¹⁶ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.82-93, quotations from pp.82, 93.

¹⁷ The role of context in limiting or modifying the sense of words and word clusters is considered by, among many others, Peter Cotterell & Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989).

writing involved.¹⁸ An example is the handling of 2 Corinthians 5:21, in which no mention is made of Paul's Judaism and the consequent possibility that he is making use of Old Testament motifs in referring to Christ's being 'made sin', such that the translation 'sin-offering' might be more appropriate (see discussion in §5.5.3). Thirdly, texts are applied with remarkable immediacy: no mention is made of the historical and cultural distances lying between text and reader.¹⁹ Isaiah 53:9 is again an example. The Hebrew grammatical plural 'in his deaths' is considered, without due regard to the historico-cultural considerations governing use of the Hebrew plural (see discussion in §3.2.3). Fourthly, no consideration is given to the effect that a reader's or reading community's stance or perspective may have in prejudicing exegesis or governing a reading. Thus, for instance, no caution is ever expressed by JDS teachers that their own developing conclusions about Christ's death might be colouring their reading of any particular text.

The cause of these problems is likely to relate to the notable absence of sustained reference to theological resources. Word-faith exegesis is not *entirely* lacking in overt recourse to written aids. Hagin and Copeland resort occasionally to the guidance of W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* for word-study.²⁰ Hagin also found help in R. Young's *Hints and Helps in Bible Interpretation*, and in C. I. Scofield's comments, as presented in the *Scofield Reference Bible*.²¹ Such citations, however, are uncommon, and from unsophisticated sources. Such exceptions notwithstanding, exegesis is consistently presented as the author's own work (though there is every reason to assume that each author's exegesis has been considerably informed by that of others in the same tradition). Of course, an absence of written reference to theological works does not prove that they have not been consulted. Indeed, a lack of citations might be deliberate: the Word-

¹⁸ For discussion of such issues, see the relevant chapters in Joel B. Green (ed.), *Hearing the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995).

¹⁹ The 'pastness of the past' is discussed by Dennis Nineham, e.g. in *The Use and Abuse of the Bible* (London: MacMillan, 1976), with Anthony Thiselton responding in *The Two Horizons* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980).

²⁰ E.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Art of Intercession* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1980), pp.13, 23, 60; *Name*, pp.18, 136; Kenneth Copeland, *Jesus In Hell* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.), p.2.

²¹ E.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Key to Scriptural Healing* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1978), p.6; *Name*, pp.121-122.

faith movement's spokespeople are not writing for an academic audience – far from it – and authors may sense that copious footnotes or other academic apparatus might alienate rather than reassure their readers. Nevertheless, such explanations are unlikely: for reasons discussed in §2.6.2, it is reasonable to assume that Word-faith authors have simply not made extensive use of available resources such as commentaries.

It is important to note, as well, that these exegetical weaknesses are not unique to the Word-faith movement. The same comments could be made about much Pentecostal hermeneutics.²² Wigglesworth may have spoken for many early Pentecostals when he declared, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God – not by reading commentaries.”²³ Uncritical, even unthinking, Bible reading has been criticised from without²⁴ and from within: Gordon Fee has written of his fellow Pentecostals,

their attitude towards Scripture regularly has included a general disregard for scientific exegesis and carefully thought-out hermeneutics... In place of scientific hermeneutics there developed a kind of pragmatic hermeneutics - obey what should be taken literally; spiritualize, allegorize or devotionalize the rest.²⁵

This phenomenon is perhaps widely present among Pentecostals for the reason that Pentecostal church leaders have not traditionally had the access to academic teaching that has been available or sought in other protestant denominations.²⁶ That such educational lack might also characterise JDS teaching is evident from the brief biographical information about Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland presented in §§1.3.1-1.3.3.

²² See Atkinson, ‘Pentecostal Hermeneutics’.

²³ Quoted by Stanley H. Frodsham, *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith* (London: Elim Publishing Company, 1949), p.73.

²⁴ E.g. MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, ch.4.

²⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 85-86; cf., more broadly, B. T. Noel, ‘Gordon Fee and the Challenge to Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Thirty Years Later’, *Pneuma* 26:1 (Spring 2004), pp.60-80.

²⁶ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.243. For discussion of more recent changes in Pentecostal attitudes to education, see ch.13: ‘Pentecostals and Academic Theology.’ Note, however, that as recently as 1993 Timothy B. Cargal could write, “The majority of currently serving clergy among classical Pentecostals have little or no formal theological education at even the undergraduate level” (‘Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age’, pp.163-187, *Pneuma* 15:2 [1993], p.169).

The exegetical work presented by JDS teaching's opponents is often of higher calibre, not least because it is generally far more informed by reference to useful resources such as commentaries.²⁷ This may be explained partly by the intentions and contexts of the works. Some, such as those by McConnell; Smail, Walker and Wright; and Lie are academic: they have been submitted towards university degrees or to academic journals. Others, while prepared for the popular market, have still deliberately assumed a form that advertises their underlying research. The actual hermeneutics being employed are not generally stated. However, they appear to be grammatico-historical.

Turning now to the interpretation of biblical texts to be employed in this thesis, a number of approaches to hermeneutics are available, and have been suggested to Pentecostals. They must therefore be considered. In 1981, Howard Ervin of ORU, while recognising the “methodology and substantive contribution of grammatico-historical, critical-contextual exegesis” was concerned about the “destructive rationalism” or “dogmatic intransigence” so frequently involved in such approaches.²⁸ Neither was he impressed with the alternative offered by the New Hermeneutic of the day. Instead, he proposed a ‘pneumatic hermeneutic’, for the Bible is a “word for which *there are no categories endemic to human understanding*. It is a word for which, in fact, there is no hermeneutic unless and until the divine *hermeneutes* (the Holy Spirit) mediates an understanding.”²⁹ Ervin’s proposal has been rightly criticised. Timothy Cargal points out the docetic nature of this view of the scriptures, and the incomprehensibility of the Bible which would result if it were true.³⁰

More recently, Cargal himself has claimed that typical Pentecostal preaching both resembles and could benefit from postmodern insights.³¹ He concludes that “any

²⁷ See, e.g., McConnell, *Promise*; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*; Bowman, *Controversy*; Perriman, *Faith*: notes and bibliographies.

²⁸ Howard M. Ervin, ‘Hermeneutics: a Pentecostal Option’, pp.11-25, *Pneuma* 2:2 (Fall 1981), pp. 24, 12.

²⁹ Ervin, ‘Hermeneutics’, p.16. Italics original.

³⁰ Cargal, ‘Controversy’, p.174; cf. Veli-Matti Karkkainen, ‘Pentecostal Hermeneutics in the Making: On the way from Fundamentalism to Postmodernism’, pp. 76-115, *JEPTA* XVIII (1998), pp.88-89.

³¹ Cargal, ‘Controversy’, p.165.

hermeneutic which cannot account for its loci of meanings within that postmodern paradigm will become nonsensical and irrelevant.”³² While Cargal gains a sympathetic ear from French Arrington,³³ Robert Menzies’ incisive critique raises valid concerns about the “ahistorical stance and epistemological scepticism of postmodernism”, the inability to evaluate readings of texts dislodged from their historical moorings, and an unacceptable promotion of the reader in Cargal’s scheme. Menzies summarises his discussion by declaring: “my counsel concerning this bandwagon is, if already on, to ‘jump off.’”³⁴

Clearly, this intra-Pentecostal debate is part of a wider hermeneutical discussion. The traditional position, famously championed for example by E. D. Hirsch,³⁵ that the task of determining the intended meaning of a text’s author was both possible and advisable, has been identified by Vanhoozer as essentially arbitrary. Nevertheless, Vanhoozer wisely supports the ethical case for seeking authorial intent.³⁶ Vanhoozer rejects, among others, the pragmatic reader-orientation of Stanley Fish’s *Is There a Text in this Class?*: “Where readers reign, reality recedes.” However, Vanhoozer counsels interpretative humility: “we can neither eradicate ourselves from the process of reading nor separate our personal identity from our interpretations.”³⁷

In this thesis, neither Ervin’s nor Cargal’s directions will be followed. Authors’ intentions will be pursued, employing the hermeneutics behind much serious exegesis of biblical texts by Pentecostals, especially by their academicians. This has not found any need to depart from the grammatico-historical methods already used within the wider evangelical world. McLean’s assertion that such a hermeneutic “ultimately interprets the classical Pentecostal experience out of the Bible”³⁸ has not

³² Cargal, ‘Controversy’, p.187.

³³ French L. Arrington, ‘The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals’, pp.101-107, *Pneuma* 16.1 (Spring 1994).

³⁴ Robert P. Menzies, ‘Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon’, pp.115-120, *Pneuma* 16.1 (Spring 1994), quoting pp.119-120.

³⁵ *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) and *The Aims of Interpretation* (1976).

³⁶ Vanhoozer, *Meaning*, p. 401.

³⁷ Vanhoozer, *Meaning*, pp.169, 382. For further discussion of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ reader-response theories, see J. Barton, ‘Thinking About Reader-Response Criticism’, *Expository Times* 113.5 (February 2002), pp.147-151; cf. J. C. Poirier, ‘Some Detracting Considerations for Reader-Response Theory’, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62:2 (April 2000), pp.250-263.

³⁸ Mark D. McLean, ‘Toward a Pentecostal Hermeneutic’, pp.35-56, *Pneuma* 6.2 (Fall 1984), p.36.

been proved right by the subsequent course of events. For instance, the grammatico-historical methods used by James D. G. Dunn in his classic critique of a key Pentecostal doctrine, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,³⁹ were fundamentally the same as those used by Robert Menzies in his defence of this distinctive,⁴⁰ though Menzies did make rather more use of redaction criticism.⁴¹ Even Pentecostals who declare that there is a need for a distinctive Pentecostal hermeneutic succeed in significant biblical exposition without one. Thus John Christopher Thomas, who writes of “our attempt to articulate a Pentecostal hermeneutic”, and is willing to experiment with various approaches,⁴² has produced important work, highly relevant to Pentecostals, without departing from ‘non-distinctive’ evangelical hermeneutics.⁴³

While grammatico-historical exegesis will be employed, factors which set the Christian scriptures apart from other works, at least in the eyes of many Christians, including Pentecostals, will be borne in mind. It is recognised that these scriptures were brought together by the early church into a closed canon which was and continues to be regarded as cohesive, and which was and is read and valued for theological and liturgical purposes. Therefore, the Bible will be interpreted as: a fundamentally coherent collection of documents, which can be expected to offer some unitary message, despite its inner divergences;⁴⁴ and a Christian document, whose primary purpose is to witness to Christ and teach His people.⁴⁵

³⁹ London: SCM Press, 1970.

⁴⁰ *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

⁴¹ See the comments of Cargal, ‘Controversy’, pp.163-164; Kenneth J. Archer, ‘Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect’, pp.63-81, *JPT* 8 (1996), p.73.

⁴² See John Christopher Thomas, ‘Women, Pentecostals and the Bible: An Experiment in Pentecostal Hermeneutics’, pp.41-56, *JPT* 5 (1994), quotation from p.56.

⁴³ John Christopher Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), e.g. pp.15-16 (concerning methods).

⁴⁴ See James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 2nd edn 1990 [1977]).

⁴⁵ See Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity Press International, pb 1994 [1984]), ch.4, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ‘From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts’, ch.1 in Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Möller (eds), *After Pentecost: Language & Biblical Interpretation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001).

2.4.4 Conclusion to §2.4

Several methodological considerations have emerged. First, the selection of biblical texts by this thesis will take account of those selected by previous participants in the debate, but will not be limited to these, nor indeed to atomised exegesis of individual texts. Instead, not only will a wider selection of texts be accessed, but note will be made of the overall views of biblical authors, and of the canon as a whole. Secondly, appeal to the original biblical languages will avoid certain weaknesses that are occasionally evident in JDS teaching through reliance on a questionable published translation. Thirdly, exegesis will be attempted that is based upon the belief that an original author's intention is reasonably accessible, and which employs grammatico-historical methods in seeking to discover that meaning.

2.5 Kenyon's contemporary influences

As noted especially in §§1.6.3; 1.7.1; 1.7.3, various debaters, in assessing JDS doctrine, consider not only biblical content but also the question of Kenyon's contemporary influences: did he gain a 'spiritualised' view of Christ's death from New Thought and Christian Science, or was his view affected more by Higher Life and Faith Cure? Research has been conducted into the extent to which Kenyon's biography displays contact with and possible influence from these two groups, and into the degree of agreement evident in his writing with the teaching of either group. This research has been useful, and it seems likely that little more can be added to the biographical detail. However, certain methodological weaknesses are discernible in the research conducted into Kenyon's writing. McConnell's foundational work, important as it is, only considers similarities between Kenyon, and New Thought and Christian Science. As an equivalent search into similarities with Higher Life and Faith Cure is not conducted, McConnell's conclusions can only be regarded as provisional, at best. In turn, McIntyre's research, while commendably thorough as regards consideration of Kenyon's familiarity with and dependence on Higher Life and Faith Cure, does not consider New Thought and Christian Science. Thus the same provisionality characterises his conclusions. Simmons' work, in this respect, is more helpful: he does consider both groups. However, further research is still worthwhile that, in considering one aspect of Kenyon's teaching in detail, looks at

both groups, not only searching for similarities but also for the lack of similarity, and for outright contrasts. The following two subsections set out the sources from each pair of groups that will be compared with Kenyon, offering a rationale for the choice in each case.

2.5.1 New Thought and Christian Science

The relationship between New Thought and Christian Science has already been noted in §1.3.1. It was stated there that P. P. Quimby was a man widely recognised as the founder of New Thought, but who was also influential in the development of Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science. They have enough in common to be considered together here.

The historical evidence that Kenyon drew his ideas from New Thought and Christian Science is not indisputable, and although McConnell makes much of it, he has to admit that Kenyon disavowed their teaching repeatedly.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, he holds that Kenyon was influenced by such groups much more than he realised or admitted. Given that this influence is possible, it is necessary to explore whether New Thought proponents and Christian Scientists positively influenced his thinking, for instance by 'spiritualising' Jesus' death. This will be considered in the chapters to come. At this stage, it is simply necessary to justify the selection of certain exemplary writers. Those who will be reviewed are Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), and Ralph Waldo Trine (1866-1958). P. P. Quimby was a professional healer who among other methods used hypnotism. He deserves study because as just stated he is effectively the founder of New Thought.⁴⁷ Thus his ideas re-emerge throughout the movement. Emerson was also a "great forerunner to the New Thought movement," and "can be regarded as a *pars pro toto* in estimating the importance of transcendentalism for the metaphysical movements."⁴⁸ Despite a theological education at Harvard Divinity School and

⁴⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, p.43; cf. Kenyon, *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.17; *Jesus the Healer*, p.77; *Wonderful Name*, pp.69-70.

⁴⁷ Many New Thought ideas, however, can be traced back through, for instance, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) to the esotericisms of previous eras (Hanegraaff, *New Age*, chs 14 and 15).

⁴⁸ Joel Porte, 'Ralph Waldo Emerson', 1979, accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.www.hubs.com/framepage.htm>; Hanegraaff, *New Age*, pp.457-458.

ordination in 1826 as a Unitarian minister,⁴⁹ Emerson quickly rejected ‘orthodox’ Christianity in favour of an esotericism in which salvation involved a spiritual awakening from mere materialism and an escape from its prison.⁵⁰ He is selected because McConnell claims, quoting Ern Baxter, that Kenyon read his work.⁵¹ Mary Baker Eddy founded Christian Science after being healed of a severe injury, having earlier in life rejected some of the teachings of ‘orthodox’ Christianity. She is chosen because of McConnell’s further claim, quoting Baxter and John Kennington, that Kenyon drew from Eddy’s thought.⁵² Trine was “an author whose work has been characterized as ‘a *Reader’s Digest* condensed and Bowdlerized Emerson.’”⁵³ He is chosen because he was a student with, and somewhat paradoxically a teacher of, Kenyon at the Emerson School of Oratory.⁵⁴

In each of the four following chapters, teaching will be sought in these sources which resembles Kenyon’s, and from which Kenyon might conceivably have derived his. Where appropriate, note will also be offered of contrasts. However, Kenyon’s teaching will, as stated earlier, also be compared with equivalent material in Higher Life and Faith Cure sources, and so to these groups methodological discussion now turns.

2.5.2 Higher Life and Faith Cure

§§1.5.1; 1.7.1; 1.7.3 introduced the biographical research of Simmons, McIntyre and Lie that highlights Kenyon’s possible indebtedness not so much to New Thought as to the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements. McIntyre’s research, though supported

⁴⁹ Richard Geldard, *The Spiritual Teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), pp.4, 123, 128.

⁵⁰ Geldard, *Teachings*, pp.15-17, 24-28. Conceptual similarities with ancient Gnosticism are not hard to find. Emerson greatly admired Emanuel Swedenborg (Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘Representative Men’ [1850, accessed 14.4.05 from <http://cornerstone.www.hubs.com/framepage.htm>], ch.3), and Giovanni Filoramo notes that Swedenborg’s “visions are replete with Gnostic themes” (*A History of Gnosticism* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1990] p.191, n.8).

⁵¹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.26. Baxter “spent a considerable amount of time with Kenyon in the latter years of his life” (p.25).

⁵² McConnell, *Promise*, pp.25-26 (Kennington “as a young preacher knew Kenyon intimately and considered him a mentor”).

⁵³ Hanegraaff, *New Age*, p.489, quoting Versluis.

⁵⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, p.41; McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.18. Trine taught Kenyon rhetoric. According to McIntyre, Trine only developed New Thought ideas after arriving at Emerson College, where he taught Kenyon. Therefore, claims McIntyre, Trine’s exposure to New Thought would have been too embryonic for him to pass any on to Kenyon (*Kenyon*, pp.18-19).

by the others', is the most thorough, and he mentions a host of significant leaders who would have influenced Kenyon. In each case, he offers clear evidence that Kenyon was a recipient of their teaching, and in many cases he presents equally clear evidence that Kenyon was a positive admirer. Key figures from this group will be reviewed in this thesis, chosen on the bases that the historical evidence indicates the likelihood of their influencing Kenyon, and that they wrote material relevant to the JDS debate. They are: Adoniram J. Gordon (1836-1895); Carrie Judd Montgomery (1858-1946); Andrew Murray (1828-1917); Arthur T. Pierson (1837-1911); Albert B. Simpson (1843-1919); Hannah W. Smith (1832-1911); Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928); and George D. Watson (1845-1923).

A. J. Gordon was a leading New England evangelical,⁵⁵ the minister of the church in which Kenyon finally committed his life to God, and the author Kenyon quoted most.⁵⁶ He was a speaker at the Northfield conferences, where Kenyon would have heard him speak.⁵⁷ Although his connections with Boston meant that he ministered in an environment where he was bound to be exposed to Eddy's Christian Science,⁵⁸ his views, typical of Faith Cure, stood in contrast to hers,⁵⁹ and he "bitterly opposed... her teachings in word and print."⁶⁰

Carrie Judd Montgomery was a close friend of Kenyon.⁶¹ Judd (her maiden name) was healed in 1879. Her *The Prayer of Faith*⁶² contained her testimony and beliefs concerning healing. It stayed in print throughout her influential life.⁶³ The famous and influential Andrew Murray was six times Moderator of Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. His many writings were translated into various

⁵⁵ Dayton, *Roots*, p.176.

⁵⁶ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.36, 80, 86; Lie, 'Kenyon', p.79.

⁵⁷ Simmons, *Kenyon*, p.23.

⁵⁸ Hardesty, *Faith Cure*, p.87; Dayton, *Roots*, p.128.

⁵⁹ Cf. Hardesty, *Faith Cure*, p.4.

⁶⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.36.

⁶¹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.75.

⁶² London: Victory Press, new ed. 1930 (1880).

⁶³ Hardesty, *Faith Cure*, pp.7-12.

languages. He was a visiting speaker at conferences in Keswick and Northfield.⁶⁴ Kenyon heard him speak at Northfield, and published extracts from his work.⁶⁵

A. T. Pierson, a close friend of A. J. Gordon and fellow speaker at Northfield, and someone else whose writings Kenyon sometimes published,⁶⁶ was a pioneer premillennialist, and enthusiastic supporter of international missions, becoming editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*.⁶⁷ A. B. Simpson, a champion of both healing and holiness, was founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.⁶⁸ Kenyon was warmly respectful of his teaching.⁶⁹

Hannah Whitall Smith's writing was typical of Higher Life. Kenyon publicly used a prayer of consecration that she had written.⁷⁰ R. A. Torrey, another Northfield speaker, was successor to D. L. Moody as superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute. His teaching on 'the baptism with the Holy Spirit' was an important forerunner of the views of Pentecostalism,⁷¹ and Kenyon heard Torrey speak on the Holy Spirit.⁷² Finally, George D. Watson often spoke at Christian and Missionary Alliance conferences, and was known as the 'apostle to the sanctified'.⁷³ His work was admired and published by Kenyon.⁷⁴

2.5.3 Conclusion to §2.5

Several sources have been identified, and their choice justified, for making a comparison between JDS teaching (especially Kenyon's) on the one hand, and Kenyon's possible contemporary sources on the other. Sources from both New Thought and Higher Life are needed in order to confirm or deny McConnell's thesis

⁶⁴ J. du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray* (London: Marshall Brothers, Limited, 1919).

⁶⁵ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.77; cf. Lie, 'Kenyon', p.79.

⁶⁶ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.87-88.

⁶⁷ Dana L. Robert, *Occupy until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁶⁸ Hardesty, *Faith Cure*, p.23.

⁶⁹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.64; Lie, 'Kenyon', p.79.

⁷⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.54.

⁷¹ Dayton, *Roots*, pp.102-103.

⁷² McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.89.

⁷³ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.52; J. Edwin Newby, contents page of G. D. Watson, *A Pot of Oil* (Electronic edn, 2001 [n.d.] accessed 4.2.05 from www.enterhisrest.org/wisdomminister/pot_of_oil.pdf).

⁷⁴ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.52.

that Kenyon was distinctly affected by the former. Each chapter will include an appropriate analysis of the movements' writing, searching for clues that might indicate the variety of teaching on which Kenyon leant more.

2.6 Reference to Christian theology

The three JDS teachers under review have not engaged in significant overt contact with detailed Christian theology, historical or contemporary. This is evidenced throughout their writings, as will be considered in §2.6.1. Possible reasons for this will be reviewed in §2.6.2, before §2.6.3 introduces the degree to which their debaters engage with wider theological discourse. Thereafter, §2.6.4 contrasts the use of historical theology that will occur in this thesis, and offers a justification for this contrasting approach.

2.6.1 Theological sources in JDS teaching

Kenyon's work displays little interaction with theological sources. Though in one book he introduced chapters quoting authors as wide ranging as Voltaire and Campbell Morgan,⁷⁵ he did not engage with those he quoted. His general teaching method was simply to quote biblical passages and then offer his interpretation of them. He did though on occasion indicate the views he opposed. For example, he briefly discussed the 'Second Work' belief in total sanctification, opposing it with his 'Finished Work' theology. In this discussion, he referred to John Wesley's journal, with the clear implication that he had read it.⁷⁶ He was also a stout critic of 'modernism', and mentioned his disagreement with annihilationism.⁷⁷ His criticism of 'liberalism' has been suggested by Simmons as a possible spur to his development of JDS teaching.⁷⁸

Hagin made only rare reference to church history or historical theology: his writings consisted mainly of informal Bible study and stories about his experiences in

⁷⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.44, 218.

⁷⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.159-160.

⁷⁷ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.14; *Father*, p.118. McIntyre observes that Kenyon had once held to annihilationism (*Kenyon*, p.6). He also indicates that Kenyon engaged in debate with Unitarian ideas of his day (*Kenyon*, p.144).

⁷⁸ Simmons, quoted in Perriman, *Faith*, p.262.

ministry. He did offer a very brief discussion of Calvinism and Arminianism, referring to “old school” and “new school” Calvinism, and to the beliefs of Finney. He criticised both Calvinist and Arminian belief, as briefly portrayed by him, though his criticisms of Calvinism were more stringent.⁷⁹ He briefly referred elsewhere to Finney’s autobiography,⁸⁰ and quoted John Wesley concerning prayer and faith.⁸¹ He also offered a very short history of John Alexander Dowie’s ministry, acknowledging its demise.⁸² However, such references were rare and brief.

Similarly, Hagin did not generally engage in debate with contemporary opponents. He wrote, however, of Christian Science and “metaphysical, mind-science religions”, clearly distinguishing such beliefs from his own, which he described as “Full Gospel”.⁸³ He could be found taking issue with the biblical interpretations of a “modernistic preacher” he had read.⁸⁴ Furthermore, he tackled, at a rudimentary level, ideas about ‘soul sleep’ and reincarnation.⁸⁵ He could be simply dismissive, however, of wider reading, declaring that only the Bible contains true answers.⁸⁶ Such reading as Hagin did pursue was generally ‘closer to home’ theologically. As well as E. W. Kenyon’s *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*,⁸⁷ he referred to works by others appreciative of Kenyon: John G. Lake’s *Sermons on Dominion Over Demons, Disease, and Death*;⁸⁸ T. L. Osborn’s *Healing the Sick*;⁸⁹ F. F. Bosworth’s *Christ the*

⁷⁹ Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, pp.10-11.

⁸⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Interceding Christian* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 9th printing 1979), p.27; *Prayer Secrets*, p.17.

⁸¹ Hagin, *Art of Intercession*, p.1; *New Thresholds*, p.8.

⁸² Hagin, *Understanding*, pp.100-101; cf. *Don’t Blame God!*, ch.2.

⁸³ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Exceedingly Growing Faith* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1973), p.33; *Right and Wrong Thinking*, p.3 (quoted); *Zoe*, p.40.

⁸⁴ Hagin, *El Shaddai*, pp.2, 4. Hagin’s concerns were with a denial of miracles, including Christ’s virgin birth (p.18). Hagin was also critical of ‘dead formalism’ (*Fresh Anointing*, p.94).

⁸⁵ Hagin, *Human Spirit*, p.6.

⁸⁶ Hagin, *Man On Three Dimensions*, p.5.

⁸⁷ Hagin, *Name*, throughout.

⁸⁸ Hagin, *Prayer Secrets*, p.8. John G. Lake (1870-1935) was the leader whom Hagin praised most: a “mighty apostle of God” who “did an amazing work” (*Name*, p.108, *Art of Intercession*, p.42; cf. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Right and Wrong Thinking* [Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1966], pp.22-23, *Demons*, pp.7-8). Lake was a missionary in South Africa (J. R. Zeigler, ‘Lake, John Graham’, p.531, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*; Gloria Copeland [ed.], *John G. Lake* [Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, rev. 1995 (1994)], pp.xiii-xxxi). Lake did not mention Kenyon in his sermons. However, McIntyre reports that, according to Lake’s son-in-law, “Lake’s favorite book other than the Bible was Kenyon’s *The Father and His Family*” (*Kenyon*, p.145). Some of Lake’s ideas certainly mirrored those of Kenyon. He taught that: unfallen humanity was in “God’s class of being”; fallen humanity is ‘spiritually dead’; Christ suffered at Satan’s hands; Christ “satisfied the claims of justice”; Christian regeneration is an incarnation, and involves partaking in the divine nature (Lake’s

Healer;⁹⁰ and the words of Corrie ten Boom.⁹¹ Much of his other reading was of Pentecostalism's precursors and pioneers, for instance: Smith Wigglesworth's *Ever Increasing Faith*;⁹² T. J. McCrossan's *Bodily Healing and the Atonement*;⁹³ books by Charles S. Price;⁹⁴ Howard Carter's *Questions and Answers on Spiritual Gifts*;⁹⁵ and Lilian B. Yeomans' *The Great Physician*.⁹⁶

transcribed sermons in Copeland, *Lake*, pp.65, 66, 68, 72, 196-197, 430). It is therefore noteworthy that Lake did not teach a 'spiritual death' of Christ, during which the latter partook of a satanic nature.

⁸⁹ Hagin, *Right and Wrong Thinking*, p.27. T. L. Osborn (1934-) is a healing evangelist with an international ministry. Like Hagin, he holds Kenyon's writings in remarkably high regard: "I treasure Dr. Kenyon's books above all others in my library, except my Bible." (*Healing the Sick* [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1951], p.138; cf. Simmons, *Kenyon*, pp.296-298). His understanding of healing, and particularly the place of faith and 'positive confession' in the process, mirrors Kenyon's (*Healing the Sick*, esp. ch.17). Some of his language concerning the atonement also reflects Kenyon's (e.g. use of the words 'legal' and 'substitute'). It is therefore noteworthy that Osborn does not teach JDS: his references to the death of Christ focus on the efficacy of the physical death in atonement, and place the timing of this efficacious work on the cross (*Healing the Sick*, pp.161, 162, 182, 185 etc.).

⁹⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Faith Food: Daily Devotions for Spring* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1977), p.80. F. F. Bosworth (1877-1958) was, in the nineteenth century, part of the Faith Cure movement. At the turn of the twentieth century he embraced Pentecostalism (R. M. Riss, 'Bosworth, Fred Francis', p.94, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*). Unsurprisingly, he believed in healing in the atonement. His *Christ the Healer* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973 [1924], e.g. ch.2) acknowledges dependence on Kenyon in its 1973 edition (p.148; cf. McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.348, n.35; Simmons' reference to Bosworth's "admiration for Kenyon" [*Kenyon*, p.313, n.42]), but does not display evidence of JDS doctrine (e.g. pp.45, 77).

⁹¹ Hagin, *Name*, p.124. Corrie ten Boom translated Kenyon's material into Dutch (McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.163). She tells her story in, among others, *Tramp for the Lord* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974).

⁹² Hagin, *Name*, p.49. Hagin often referred most positively to Wigglesworth (e.g. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Ministering to the Oppressed* [Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 4th edn 1973], p.17; *Zoe*, p.40; *Praying*, p.12; *Understanding*, pp.98-99, 106, 120; *The Real Faith* [Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1970], p.14). Wigglesworth (1859-1947) was an English pioneer Pentecostal healing evangelist (W. E. Warner, 'Wigglesworth, Smith', pp.883-884, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*). His references to the incarnation and crucifixion did not suggest influence by Kenyon (R. Liardon, *Smith Wigglesworth Speaks to Students of the Bible* [Tulsa, OK: Albury Publishing, 1998], p.191; S. Wigglesworth, *Ever Increasing Faith* [Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, rev. ed. 1971 (1924)], pp.17, 33, 43, 79).

⁹³ Hagin, *Art*, p.15. As his book title implies, T. J. McCrossan believed that physical healing was provided for in the atonement. He quoted A. J. Gordon, Andrew Murray and A. B. Simpson to this effect (*Bodily Healing and the Atonement*, re-edited by R. Hicks and K. E. Hagin [Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1982 (1930)], pp.24-25). His work suggests no dependence on Kenyon.

⁹⁴ Hagin, *Right and Wrong Thinking*, pp.29-30; cf. *Prayer Secrets*, p.15. Price (1887-1947) was a successful early Pentecostal minister (R. M. Riss, 'Price, Charles Sydney', pp.726-727, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*). His *The Real Faith* (Pasadena, CA: Charles S. Price Publishing Company, 1940) and *Spiritual and Physical Health* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1972 [1946]) resemble Kenyon's thinking only in his view that faith is spiritual rather than mental (*Real Faith*, throughout) and in his insistent statements that partaking of the divine nature is not an eschatological hope for believers but a present reality (e.g. *Real Faith*, pp.92, 111; *Health*, pp.23-24, 113, 116). Otherwise, there is no particular similarity, for instance in his portrayal of the crucifixion (*Real Faith*, p.110; *Health*, pp.23, 123-124, 158, 162).

⁹⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1974), p.80. Carter (1891-1971) was principal of the Pentecostal Missionary Union Bible School in Hampstead 1921-1948, and chairman of the British Assemblies of God 1934-1945 (C. Whittaker, *Seven Pentecostal Pioneers* [Basingstoke: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1983], pp.100-130). The subject-

While Hagin was obviously impressed by these sources, there is no obvious evidence that Hagin self-consciously and deliberately let his theology be influenced by them. However, unconscious influence presumably occurred.⁹⁷ His widespread plagiarism of Kenyon clearly indicates his influence by the latter. McConnell claims, plausibly, that Kenyon had considerably more doctrinal influence on Hagin than did those sources that Hagin quoted and cited more freely.⁹⁸ While, according to McConnell, he also plagiarised J. A. MacMillan's 'The Authority of the Believer',⁹⁹ it seems likely from his praise for their ministries that, after Kenyon, Hagin was more affected by such individuals as Lake and Wigglesworth.

Even more than Hagin, Copeland restricts his writing to expounding biblical texts, or simply retelling their narratives, illustrated by short accounts from his family life or public ministry. Thus too his writing offers very little church history or historical theology. Four magazine columns devoted to a simple retelling of early Christian persecution and martyrdom are the exception rather than the rule.¹⁰⁰ Neither does Copeland engage in written debate with contemporary theological viewpoints opposed to his own. This does not mean that he is unaware of such views. Those references to opposing views which do exist are not complimentary, and are usually very brief and general. Copeland's favoured term for the system of Christian thought which he sees himself as countering is, simply, 'religion'. Religion, he declares, has provided the church with an under-realised eschatology, and with the attitude that divine sovereignty removes from believers the responsibility for faith-filled action.¹⁰¹

matter of his *Gifts of the Spirit* (n.pl.: Howard Carter, 1946) does not allow a comparison of his view of the atonement with Kenyon's.

⁹⁶ Hagin, *Turning Hopeless Situations Around*, pp.7-12. Yeomans (1861-1942) was a Pentecostal healer (C. M. Robeck, Jr., 'Yeomans, Lilian Barbara', p.907, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*). Hagin quite often referred to her, e.g. in *Growing Faith*, p.77; *New Thresholds*, p.32. Her view of the crucifixion did not reflect Kenyon's distinctives (e.g. *Balm of Gilead* [Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, rev. ed. 1973 (1936)], pp.40, 46; *Health and Healing* [Springfield, MI: Gospel Publishing House, rev. ed. 1973 (1938 as *The Royal Road to Health-Ville*)], pp.24, 56).

⁹⁷ While perhaps not similar enough to be regarded as plagiarism, there is an 'uneasy' resemblance between Hagin's words in *Zoe*, p.1, and Bosworth's in *Christ the Healer*, p.149.

⁹⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, p.69.

⁹⁹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.69.

¹⁰⁰ Copeland, 'Power of Resistance', pp.4-5.

¹⁰¹ E.g. Kenneth Copeland, 'Entering God's Rest', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 25.8 (September 1997), p.5; 'God Isn't Mad Anymore!', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 21.5 (May 1993), p.2; 'Faith for the Final Days', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 23.5 (May 1995), p.2; 'Turn Your Hurts', p.7.

The only people Copeland quotes with any frequency are Word-faith or Pentecostal leaders. Examples include: Kenneth E. Hagin,¹⁰² Oral Roberts,¹⁰³ Jesse Duplantis,¹⁰⁴ and R. W. Schambach.¹⁰⁵ Even then, the quotations are only brief asides or illustrations to his points. He gives no impression thereby that he has learnt his theology from their works. He praises Kenyon,¹⁰⁶ refers to Reinhard Bonnke's "wonderful ministry",¹⁰⁷ and celebrates the work of Yonggi Cho.¹⁰⁸ John G. Lake is also obviously an important figure in the Copelands' thinking, because Gloria Copeland has published a full collection of Lake's sermons.¹⁰⁹ Again, however, only the Bible and his own sense of God speaking to him overtly determine Copeland's beliefs. For instance, he refers to learning, in 1967, that 'you can have what you say', but does not indicate there that he learnt this idea from Hagin, only referring to Mark 11:23.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, his recorded sermon titles suggest a dependence on Kenyon that he does not more openly concede, for, as stated previously (§1.3.3), *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne* and *What Satan Saw on the Day of Pentecost*, are titles of one of Kenyon's books, and chapter 14 of that book, respectively.

¹⁰² Kenneth Copeland, 'Join The It Shall Come to Pass Generation', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 26.5 (May 1998), p.5.

¹⁰³ Kenneth Copeland, 'Let Your Joy Overflow', pp.5-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 27.11 (December 1999), p.6; 'The Message of the Anointing', pp.5-9, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.7 (August 1996), p.9.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Copeland, 'Believe the Love!', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 24.5 (May 1996), p.4. Duplantis is a fellow Word-faith teacher, who regularly contributes to Copeland's *Believer's Voice Of Victory* magazine.

¹⁰⁵ Copeland, 'No Problem', p.7. Schambach (1926-), previously an Assemblies of God minister, is an independent healing evangelist (S. Shemeth, 'Schambach, Robert W.', p.769, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*).

¹⁰⁶ Copeland, *Walking in the Realm of the Supernatural*, quoted in Lie, 'Kenyon', p.71.

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth Copeland, 'The Gospel to the Poor', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory*, 25.2 (February 1997), p.7. Bonnke (1940-) is an independent Pentecostal itinerant healing evangelist (H. V. Synan, 'Bonnke, Reinhard Willi Gottfried', p.93, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*).

¹⁰⁸ Kenneth Copeland, 'Dream More Than You Can Dream', pp.2-5, *Believer's Voice Of Victory* 21.10 (October 1993), p.5. Cho (1936-) is a Pentecostal minister in Seoul, reputedly leader of the world's largest local church (P. Yonggi Cho, *Successful Home Cell Groups* [Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1981], p.v; D. J. Wilson, 'Cho, Paul Yonggi', pp.161-162, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*).

¹⁰⁹ Copeland, *Lake*.

¹¹⁰ Copeland, 'Stick Out', p.4; cf. n.a., 'Harvest Time', p.19.

2.6.2 Possible Reasons for a Lack of References to Theology

There are several possible reasons why JDS teachers hardly mention wider theological writing. Four prominent possibilities will be discussed in detail, one to be discounted and the latter three to be accepted.

An apparent possibility is the genre of their teaching, which is determined by the context in which it is given, and the audience for whom it is intended. Their teaching is most definitely offered to the church rather than the academy, and so is hardly likely to contain multiple citations of scholarly sources, even if in fact JDS teachers are familiar with such sources. However, while this reason, seen in isolation, is entirely plausible, further consideration actually suggests that many JDS teachers simply do not have extensive knowledge of historical theology, and when they do, their lack of engagement is due to deliberate avoidance, rather than genre.

In contrast, by far the most likely reason for JDS teaching's lack of interaction with theological discussion has its roots in Kenyon's distinction between 'revelation knowledge' and 'sense knowledge', in which he explicitly and repeatedly prioritised the former over the latter, as part of his more general promotion of the spiritual over the psychological and physical. Revelation knowledge was imparted by God through the Bible.¹¹¹ Thus Kenyon relied purely upon scriptural material in his development of doctrine.¹¹² In this distinction he was followed by Hagin, who laid store on both biblical material and a sense of personal revelation,¹¹³ and by Copeland.¹¹⁴ Given their understanding and devaluing of 'sense knowledge', it is to be expected that JDS teachers will not seek to build their ideas on theological discussion that departs at all from overt direct reliance on the verbal content of the Bible.

¹¹¹ See especially E. W. Kenyon, *The Two Kinds of Knowledge* (Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1998 [1938]).

¹¹² McIntyre suggests that Kenyon may also have been influenced by his early association with the Free Will Baptists, who taught, "The Scriptures accompanied by the aids of the Holy Spirit are the only source which... is requisite to qualify [one] for teaching the great truths of religion", and "the productions of pious men... should be consulted with great caution, lest errors be imbibed with truth." (Kenyon, p.27).

¹¹³ Hagin, *Real Faith*, p.5; *Name of Jesus*, p.9.

¹¹⁴ Kenneth Copeland, 'What Kind of Faith do you have?', pp.4-7, *Believer's Voice Of Victory*, 25.5 (May 1997), p.4; *What Happened*, side 1.

Kenyon's distinction between spiritual and mental faculties sometimes resembled sheer anti-intellectualism: "In the beginning, man's spirit was the dominant force in the world; when he sinned, his mind became dominant – sin dethroned the spirit and crowned the intellect; but grace is restoring the spirit to its place of dominion" and "One of the greatest mistakes that has been made in our intellectual culture has been the ignoring of the spirit. Knowledge of our intellects has taken the throne, and our spirits have been locked away in prison." However, this impression is misleading. He could equally write: "Man's education should cover the whole being. To train only the physical is to make a prize fighter. To train only the mental is to make an intellectual anarchist. To train only the spiritual is to make a fanatic."¹¹⁵ Kenyon's overall point was not that the intellect has no legitimate place in human affairs, but that it cannot receive direct revelation from God.¹¹⁶ Also, it would be more accurate to describe his position not as anti-intellectualism, but as anti-physicalism: his distrust of 'sense knowledge' was not so much a rejection of the mind as a means to know God, but of the physical senses.

Such a distinction is not to be regarded as unique to the Word-faith movement. The wider evangelical and, particularly, Pentecostal world has often been criticised from within and without for a prioritisation of 'heart knowledge' over 'head knowledge', and for a biblicism that fails to take theological discussion seriously unless it constantly refers back directly to biblical content.¹¹⁷

A second important factor, for certain JDS teachers, is their policy not to engage in discussion with differing theological viewpoints, if in so doing they are simply defending themselves from criticism.¹¹⁸ Copeland "believes in most cases no one changes their beliefs and a [*sic*] even greater division is created in the Body of

¹¹⁵ Respectively: Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.25; *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.48; *Wonderful Name*, p.68.

¹¹⁶ Even this idea was maintained rather ambivalently by Kenyon: "Sense Knowledge can see the handiwork of God, can see the design in Creation, but it cannot find the Designer" (*Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.12), but "Creation shows the Designer's Master Hand." (*Father*, p.19).

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds: Why Evangelicals Don't Think & What to Do About It* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), pp.32, 41; cf. Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, ch.21, 'Back to the Bible!'.
¹¹⁸ Barron, *Gospel*, p.172; DeArteaga, *Quenching*, p.231 (concerning Hagin); Margaret Fendley, 'Letter from Kenneth Copeland Ministries' (1996), accessed 8.10.04 from www.victoryword.100megspop2.com/copeland_response (concerning Copeland).

Christ.”¹¹⁹ The desire to avoid such division is commendable, but the particular policy employed obviously increases these teachers’ vulnerability to isolation from correcting and balancing viewpoints.

This eschewal of debate is not universal throughout the Word-faith movement. Michael Bruno’s *Christianity in Power* is a direct response to Hanegraaff’s *Christianity in Crisis*, replying almost point by point. In this context, it is interesting to note, however, that while Hanegraaff *does* interact occasionally with historical theology (see §2.6.3), Bruno *does not*. Bruno’s only interest in doctrinal history is his view that Hanegraaff’s opposition to the ‘message of faith’ mirrors the opposition that the Roman church gave early Protestantism, and that faced by Finney from Calvinists.¹²⁰ When actually confronting Hanegraaff’s ideas, Bruno simply resorts to biblical material to undergird his arguments. Hanegraaff’s appeals to later thinkers are ignored.

A final possible contribution to JDS teaching’s isolation from academic theology is paucity of formal theological, and in some cases general, education. It emerged in §§1.3.1-1.3.3 that the JDS teachers under review are relatively unschooled or self-schooled. While this observation holds least true for Kenyon, who, for instance, read Irenaeus and Calvin,¹²¹ it may nevertheless have increased the extent to which academic theology remained a largely untapped world for them. It is thus of interest that Hobart Freeman, the one prominent Word-faith teacher to have spoken out strongly against JDS doctrine, had a doctorate in theology.¹²²

In summary, it is unlikely that JDS teachers have a detailed knowledge of theological discourse but refrain from overtly referring to it for the sake of their audience. It is more likely that they are ignorant of much, and dismissive of much else, for the reasons set out above. While this is understandable, it is not defensible. The approach

¹¹⁹ Fendley, ‘Letter’.

¹²⁰ Michael Bruno, *Christianity in Power* (Slippery Rock, PA: Abba Ministries, 1994), pp.3-5.

Bruno’s ‘historical’ survey is remarkably brief, unspecific, simplified and, at times, sensationalised.

¹²¹ Lie, personal correspondence, 28.7.06; McIntyre, personal correspondence, 1.8.06.

¹²² Barron, *Gospel*, p.19, and see §1.5.1.

renders them highly vulnerable, both to repeating the mistakes of the past and to developing views from which greater theological discussion would warn them away.

2.6.3 Reference to Historical Theology by JDS debaters

Here, the picture is much more mixed. Debaters vary considerably in their theological and academic focus, as well as their precise subject matter. While Brandon and McConnell restrict their studies to biblical material, Hanegraaff, Smail Walker and Wright, Simmons, Perriman and DeArteaga do to varying extents discuss insights offered by historical theology. This variety can be illustrated with reference to three examples: McConnell; Hanegraaff; and Smail, Walker and Wright.

McConnell's methods allow him no sustained interaction with the broad history of Christology and soteriology. In each chapter in his Part 2, 'A Biblical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement', his initial description of the Word-faith movement's views of the subject matter in hand is followed, first by a comparison with New Thought and related ideas, to show similarities, and then by a comparison with biblical material to indicate differences.¹²³ No opportunity thereby presents itself, other than in one or two asides,¹²⁴ for McConnell to consider the extent to which, for instance, JDS doctrine resembles or departs from those trajectories of thought with which Christian theologians have wrestled for millennia.

Hanegraaff's response to JDS teaching interacts somewhat with the history of Christian ideas.¹²⁵ Of particular note, he opines that the relationship between God and Satan displayed in the Word-faith movement's view of the cross "stands in marked contrast to the historical ransom theory as set forth by such figures as Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and Anselm".¹²⁶ This comparison with early ransom theories is important and useful. It will be pursued in §6.3.

¹²³ Thus the subtitle of the books (... *Biblical Analysis*...) is more accurate than that of his original thesis (... *Theological... Analysis*...).

¹²⁴ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.123, 125.

¹²⁵ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.130, 111, 123, 117-118, 140, 176.

¹²⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.395, n.2. Hanegraaff sheds no light on what that contrast might be.

Giving much greater consideration to issues of historical theology than previous debaters, Smail, Walker and Wright judge that:

What in fact they [JDS teachers] have done is to take three strands of early Christian theology (picked up originally by Kenyon from somewhere), twisted them, weaved them together with metaphysical cultic twine and hermeneutical guile, and created a syncretistic tapestry of heretical nonsense.¹²⁷

These three strands are the ransom theory, the descent into hell, and theosis. Smail, Walker and Wright proceed to study each in turn, indicating ways in which, in their view, Word-faith thinking departs from ‘orthodox’ Christian renditions of these ideas.¹²⁸ As with ransom theories, early ideas about the descent into hell are important comparators with JDS teaching. They too will be considered in §6.3.

Whether the use of historical theology by JDS teaching’s critics is successful will emerge in later chapters of this thesis. At this point, it is sufficient to make the methodological observation that, on occasion, historical figures are presented in ways which tend towards hagiography. An example is John Calvin.¹²⁹ The assertion, for instance, that Kenyon’s views are validated if they reflect those of Calvin may involve a failure to be duly critical of Calvin’s views.

2.6.4 Reference to historical theology in this thesis

This thesis will depart from rather than follow the example set it by much Pentecostalism, which, while united in valuing the Bible, is far less certain about the usefulness of post-biblical Christian tradition as a measure against which newer ideas might be judged. In fact, many articulations of theology from within Pentecostalism itself or from broader charismatic perspectives simply ignore the possible role of tradition as a source from which beliefs might be developed.¹³⁰ When the matter is raised, discussion is remarkably brief. Thus the Assemblies of God’s *Systematic Theology*, the first chapter of which does contain some pre-Pentecostal and

¹²⁷ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.70.

¹²⁸ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, pp.70-75.

¹²⁹ See, e.g., DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, pp.240, 243.

¹³⁰ From within the Elim Pentecostal Church, P. S. Brewster (ed.), *Pentecostal Doctrine* (n.pl.: P. S. Brewster, 1976), has a chapter on ‘The Inspiration of the Bible’, but no chapter on historical theology or Christian tradition. From broader charismatic perspectives, the same lack is evident in J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology* Vol.1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988); Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), despite their lengthy sections concerning the Bible. Williams only offers tiny sections on ‘Human Reflection’ (p.29) and ‘The Question of “Natural Theology”’ (p.36).

Pentecostal history, contains in its second chapter, 'Theological Foundations', a two paragraph section entitled 'Historical Theology', which is confined to little more than setting out what such theology is.¹³¹

Reasons for this eschewal of historical theology relate both to Pentecostalism's view of the Bible, and to its understanding of history. The Bible is often approached with an instinctive immediacy which celebrates obvious commonalities (for instance in perceived religious experience) between human authors and readers. Historical and cultural differences between the two are overlooked. Thus no need is seen to investigate the historical course of the millennia lying between.¹³² Pentecostalism's view of church history sometimes takes the form, not unique to it, of 'decline and revival': after the close of the New Testament the church quickly declined into doctrinal error and spiritual emptiness; with perhaps some exceptions, it remained thus until God poured out His 'Latter Rain' and Pentecostalism was born.¹³³ Such an erroneous and naïve view of history is naturally linked with the idea that nothing useful can be learnt from the intervening centuries.

Notwithstanding such unconcern for historical issues among many Pentecostals, which unconcern is replicated within the Word-faith movement, this thesis will pay considerable attention to historical theology. On this issue, Pentecostals must recognise possible naïvety and listen to voices 'outside the immediate family'. As T. F. Torrance rightly observes:

The immense value of church history and of the history of doctrine is the dimension of historical depth it gives to one's understanding of the faith, and the balance it brings into one's judgments... [N]o constructive thinking that is worth while [*sic*] can be undertaken that sets at nought the intellectual labours of the centuries that are enshrined in tradition, or be undertaken on the arrogant assumption that everything must be thought through *de novo* as if nothing true had already been done or said.¹³⁴

¹³¹ James H. Railey, Jr. and Benny C. Aker, in Stanley M. Horton (ed.), *Systematic Theology* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, revised edition, 1995 [1994]), pp.46-47.

¹³² Karkkainen, 'Hermeneutics', e.g. pp.78-79; cf. Cargal, 'Controversy', pp.164, 187; Kenneth J. Archer, 'Early Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation', pp.32-70, *JPT* 18 (2001), p.68.

¹³³ G. Wacker, 'Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism (U.S.)', pp.65-76, Burgess and McGee, *Dictionary*, e.g. p.71.

¹³⁴ T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM, 1965), pp.23, 24. Torrance mentions among the benefits of studying historical theology its corrective power, and its provision of foundations upon which newer ideas can be built.

To this can be added the positive assessment offered by Hanson in his useful introduction to *Historical Theology*:

[I]t is in fact impossible, not to say undesirable, to move from the period of the Old and the New Testaments directly to our own day, to ‘confront’ the men [*sic*] of the twentieth century with the Bible, as if nothing had happened to the Christian religion between the first and the twentieth centuries. Christianity is ‘the religion of a book’, but the religion is not the book... We regard one particular period of history as normative, but all Christian history must be illustrative... It must first be recognized that no group of Christians in the whole history of Christianity has ever succeeded in confining its doctrine to the Bible and the Bible alone... [This] is a self-evidently impossible principle. In the first place, no institution can exist in history without creating a tradition, be it a cricket club, a bird-watching society, a parliament, a police force or a literary clique. Those institutions which attempt to reject tradition merely succeed in establishing a tradition of rejecting tradition... In the second place, every intelligent person ought to realize that the Bible does not interpret itself. This is meant in the simplest and directest way. If any reader were to take a modern printed copy of the Bible and place it, open, in Trafalgar Square, it would not begin either to read itself aloud or to preach itself... No believing Christian ever believes nakedly the Bible and nothing but the Bible without any interposition of an interpreting Church, even though he may think he does.¹³⁵

Thus Pentecostalism is far more indebted to the wider Christianity of preceding and current centuries than it might care to admit. O’Neill is aware of this historical indebtedness, while simultaneously declaring the Bible’s uniqueness:

The shrewd pentecostalist preacher who commands his millions of devoted followers might insist it is his continued supernaturalist theology that does it, but what keeps the show on the road is the belief he imbibed from his Bible College teachers, which they in turn got from conservative German scholarship, that knew to drink from the same fountain as their radical colleagues, that the Bible gives anyone who reads it the clue to the history of the world.¹³⁶

This thesis will thus regard major Christian voices down the centuries as relative authorities against whose articulations JDS doctrine may legitimately be scrutinised. However, in so doing, it will not compromise the “final authority in all matters of faith and conduct”¹³⁷ that the Elim Pentecostal Church accords to the Christian scriptures. Therefore, first, historical theology will not be studied to the exclusion of the scriptures. Secondly, this thesis will deliberately focus on those historical sources which are not only relevant to the subject matter but most clearly take biblical content seriously, and which contribute to the church’s appreciation of its message.

¹³⁵ R. P. C. Hanson, ‘Introduction’, pp.9-22, J. Danielou, A. H. Couratin and John Kent, *Historical Theology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), quoting pp.9-13.

¹³⁶ J. C. O’Neill, *The Bible’s Authority* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), p.3.

¹³⁷ Elim, *Constitution*, p.1.

Thirdly, it will not adopt what Torrance calls, with reference to the Reformation era, “the Roman view of tradition that the truth of a thing is what has actually become of it in history.”¹³⁸ Rather, historical developments will be seen in the light of the biblical data which gave them birth. The method used to research historical sources will, as with scriptural texts, be grammatico-historical exegesis, due account being taken of historical particularity and distance. The hermeneutical issues involved are essentially similar to those being faced when biblical texts are interpreted.

2.6.5 Conclusion to §2.6

This section has considered reference to theological resources in the debate. It was noted that JDS teachers themselves eschew broad theological interaction, referring only to sources close to ‘theological home’. This is no doubt due to their belief in ‘revelation knowledge’, their concern about the potentially divisive nature of debate, and their relative ignorance of theological discussion. Also, use of such resources among JDS debaters is patchy and, when it does occur, brief. In contrast to these debaters and to Pentecostalism in general, this project intends to make full use of historical theological resources, though this will be restricted to discussion that is likely to enhance understanding of the Bible’s contribution to the subject, rather than draw attention away from biblical data.

2.7 Chapter conclusions

2.7.1 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that, while existing debaters have largely evaluated JDS teaching according to two criteria, biblical faithfulness and possible dependence on New Thought and Christian Science or Higher Life and Faith Cure, a third criterion deserves much fuller consideration than it has so far received: conformity to the conclusions of historical Christian theology. Each criterion raises its particular methodological issues. Comparison with biblical material presents concerns about selection of texts and translations, and interpretation of those texts. This thesis will attempt to utilise a wide range of texts, to consider overall presentations, and to be sensitive to the original biblical languages, using grammatico-historical exegesis.

¹³⁸ Torrance, *Theology*, p.23.

Consideration of New Thought and Christian Science, and Higher Life and Faith Cure demands consideration of sources from both pairs of groups, assessment of the presence and absence of similarities, and the possible presence of contrasts. Relevant authors have been selected for this task, and justification given for the selection. Discussion of historical theology has been justified, despite its absence from the work of the JDS teachers themselves, and its only partial presence in the ensuing debate.

2.7.2 Implications

One implication of incorporating a third criterion for appraising JDS doctrine into the debate is that the assessment of the doctrine that emerges may thereby be more complex. For instance, the ramifications of JDS doctrine may not only be found to interact with historic thinking about the atonement, but also with concerns the church has had about Christology or anthropology. A full discussion of these wider concerns will not be possible within the remit (and word-count) of this thesis. However, at least indications can be offered concerning the impact of JDS teaching on Word-faith trinitarianism, Christology, anthropology, and atonement theory.

A further implication that naturally arises from the identification of a set of criteria and methods is that the conclusion of the complete thesis will follow the lines of these criteria and methods. Thus, this project attempts to discover whether JDS teaching: is faithful to biblical material; arose from ‘heterodox’ or ‘orthodox’ sources when it entered the church in its final form via Kenyon; and adheres to traditional Christian formulations. If the thesis is able to supply and defend answers to these questions, it will have succeeded in achieving its main aims.

2.7.3 Key observations

Existing contributions to JDS teaching and to the JDS debate have paid great attention to the witness of the Christian scriptures. This thesis will follow suit. Many critics of JDS doctrine, following McConnell, have also examined the possible connection between Kenyon’s beliefs and pre-existing ideas in the New Thought and Christian Science movements. However, this process is far from complete. It has not

yet been applied thoroughly to all of Kenyon's distinctives (including JDS teaching), and it has often failed so far to search *both* for similarities, lack of similarities, *and* frank contrasts amongst *both* New Thought practitioners and Christian Scientists, *and* advocates of the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements. This thesis will perform all these searches, and therefore advance the debate considerably.

The thesis will also augment the discussion usefully by engaging with significant thinkers from the history of the church. Such considerations have not been entirely absent from the debate so far (as Smail, Walker and Wright's article illustrates), but there is a clear need for detailed and sustained interaction with the history of relevant Christian thought, if JDS doctrine's alleged 'heterodoxy' is to be thoroughly gauged.

3 Jesus' 'spiritual death' and its necessity

3.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the overall claims of JDS teachers¹ that Christ 'died spiritually' and that he had to do so for humanity's salvation. The ideas lying within the overall claim will be considered individually in subsequent chapters.

It has already become clear (§§1.4.5-1.4.7; 2.3.1; 2.4) that JDS teachers believe that Jesus 'died spiritually' because they believe that the Bible declares this to be so. In turn, the critics of JDS teaching believe that Christ did not 'die spiritually', for they cannot see this taught scripturally. This chapter thus focuses first on whether the scriptures directly teach that Jesus 'died spiritually' (§3.2). Secondly, as McConnell and his followers believe that Kenyon gained his 'spiritualisation' of Christ's death from New Thought and Christian Science, §3.3 will discuss whether the idea of a 'spiritual death' of Christ can be found in those sources, or in Higher Life and Faith Cure. Thereafter, §3.4 broadens the search for statements that Jesus 'died spiritually' to a range of theological contexts, as a first step, to be continued in later chapters, in discovering whether JDS teaching is as distinctly different from traditional Christianity as its detractors claim. Finally in this chapter, JDS teachers believe that in effect the Bible states that Jesus had to 'die spiritually', as well as physically, in order to save humanity from 'spiritual death', because humanity, its problems and their solutions are all essentially spiritual in nature. Thus §3.5 considers the anthropological foundation of this claim.

3.2 Biblical references to 'spiritual death'

Of course, JDS teachers do not claim that the precise phrase 'Jesus died spiritually' is found in scripture, but they do believe that certain scriptural declarations entail the notion. These include texts that are understood to declare that fallen humans are 'spiritually dead'. If this is true of fallen humans, the logic goes, it must also be true of Christ, 'our sin substitute', who underwent this 'spiritual death' to save others from it. Two key texts in this regard are reviewed here: Genesis 2:17 and Ephesians 2:1. The range of texts also includes those that are understood to make direct

¹ Here and below, 'JDS teachers' refers only to Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland. For brief references to other JDS teachers, and their variety of such teaching, see §1.4.8.

statements about Christ. Those which will be reviewed here are: Isaiah 53:9, with its plural ‘in his deaths’ (physical and ‘spiritual’?); 1 Timothy 3:16, with its reference to Jesus being ‘justified’ in spirit (and therefore previously condemned?); and 1 Peter 3:18 (Jesus was ‘made alive spiritually’ and therefore previously ‘dead spiritually’?).²

3.2.1 Genesis 2:17

בַּיּוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת

“On the day you eat thereof you will surely die.”

In JDS teaching, this death was definitely ‘spiritual’, for the simple reason that Adam did not die physically that day. Physical mortality simply followed as a necessary consequence of the ‘spiritual death’.³ Hagin related this ‘spiritual death’ not to the expulsion from Eden (Gen.3:23), but to Adam’s new inclination to hide from God (Gen.3:8).⁴ Similarly, Copeland sees it in Adam’s new-found fear expressed in Genesis 3:10.⁵

In contrast to this view, many biblical commentators see the verse as referring to physical death.⁶ Clearly, however, the narrative does not record Adam’s immediate physical death, and his subsequent parenting of sons indicates that Adam is presented as living in good health for years to come – the indication is that Adam’s sons were born after the expulsion from Eden, for Seth’s arrival was seen as a ‘replacement’ for the murdered Abel (Gen.4:25), and murder would have been inconceivable, from the narrator’s viewpoint, before Adam and Eve had submitted to the serpent. Commentators present a number of possible solutions to this chronological problem. Hamilton bypasses chronology in suggesting that the Hebrew is helpfully rendered:

² There are other passages referred to in JDS literature (e.g. Acts 2:24; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 2:9, etc.). Passages are selected for discussion here on the basis that, taken together, they seem to form the strongest evidence for JDS doctrine’s case.

³ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.29; Hagin, *Name*, p.30; Zoe, p.28; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.2.

⁴ Hagin, *Name*, p.31.

⁵ Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14.

⁶ E.g. E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p.17; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* ET John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1984 [1974]), pp.224-225; G. Aalders, *Genesis Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), p.93; V. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp.172-174; J. L. Harris, ‘An Exposition of Genesis 2:4-11:32’, pp.39-55, *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 44.1 (Fall 2001), p.45.

“as surely as you eat of it you shall die.”⁷ If chronology must be retained, however, he tentatively suggests the alternative, “you deserve to die.”⁸ However, Westermann had already dismissed such ‘softenings’ and simply accepted that, according to the narrative, “After the man and the woman have eaten from the tree, a new situation arises in which God acts differently from the way he had indicated.”⁹

None of these suggestions seems particularly satisfactory, and it is not surprising that JDS teaching is not alone in seeing a non-physical death at Genesis 2:17. Augustine (354-430) had not seen the death in merely physical terms:

When, therefore, it is asked what death it was with which God threatened our first parents if they should transgress the commandment they had received from Him, and should fail to preserve their obedience, - whether it was the death of soul, or of body, or of the whole man, or that which is called second death, - we must answer, It is all.

* * * * *

When, therefore, God said to the first man whom he had placed in Paradise, referring to the forbidden fruit, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” that threatening included... the first part of the first death, by which the soul is deprived of God.¹⁰

Similarly, John Calvin (1509-1564) wrote:

Under the name of death is comprehended all those miseries in which Adam involved himself by his defection; for as soon as he revolted from God, the fountain of life, he was cast down from his former state, in order that he might perceive the life of man without God to be wretched and lost, and therefore differing nothing from death. Hence the condition of man after his sin is not improperly called both the privation of life, and death.¹¹

Such views have not died out. Wenham, who agrees with Westermann that Genesis 2:17 cannot be softened to mean vaguely “when you eat” or “you shall be doomed to die”,¹² writes:

It may be that... there are two meanings of “you shall die.” We have seen that the garden of Eden narrative is full of symbols suggesting the presence of God and his life-giving power – trees, gold, rivers, and jewels used to adorn the holy of holies. In Israelite worship, true life was experienced when one went to the sanctuary. There God was present. There he gave life. But to be expelled from

⁷ Hamilton, *Genesis*, p.171.

⁸ Hamilton, *Genesis*, p.174. Similarly, Speiser, *Genesis*, p.17; Harris, ‘Exposition’, p.41.

⁹ Westermann, *Genesis*, p.225.

¹⁰ Augustine, *The City of God* XIII.12 (*NPNF* I/II, pp.250, 251).

¹¹ John Calvin, *Genesis*, ET John King (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1847 [1554]), p.127.

¹² G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), pp.67-68.

the camp, as lepers were, was to enter the realm of death... In this sense they did die on the day they ate of the tree.¹³

This interpretation has its difficulties. For instance, מות תמות in Genesis 20:7 refers clearly to physical death.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the JDS understanding offers some plausibility, for instance because, as Hagin noted,¹⁵ God used expulsion from the garden to prevent Adam's and Eve's access to the tree of life (Gen.3:22-24).

3.2.2 Ephesians 2:1

Καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν
“And you, being dead in your trespasses and sins...”

Hagin saw here a clear indication that ‘sinners’ are ‘spiritually dead’, referring also to 1 Timothy 5:6 (“She who lives for pleasure, though living, has died”). Copeland appears to draw the same conclusion.¹⁶

Clearly, the reference here is not to physical death. Also, the context (especially Ephesians 2:5; 4:18) presents this ‘death’ as ‘alienation from the life of God’, and contrasts it with being alive in Christ. The JDS exposition is therefore uncontroversial. Even the use of ‘spiritually’ is not unique to this teaching. Best contrasts this death with being “spiritually alive”. Hoehner uses the term “spiritually dead”, while Lincoln writes of “spiritual and moral death”.¹⁷ O’Brien perhaps wishes to distance himself from the motif, writing that this state “is sometimes called spiritual death”.¹⁸ Nevertheless, he does not offer any criticism of the terminology.¹⁹

¹³ Wenham, *Genesis*, p.74. D. Kidner (*Genesis* [Leicester: IVP, 1967], p.69) and J. H. Sailhamer (‘Genesis’, pp.1-284, F. E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Vol.2 [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990], p.48) concur.

¹⁴ Physical healing and therefore death are in view (e.g. Genesis 20:17); cf. Exodus 31:14; Numbers 15:32-36.

¹⁵ Hagin, *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.65.

¹⁶ Hagin, *Name*, p.30; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.5-6; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.2 (referring also to Ephesians 2:5).

¹⁷ Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), p.201; H. W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), p.308; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), p.92.

¹⁸ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Leicester: Apollos, 1999), p.156.

¹⁹ Such language is not confined to biblical studies. Vladimir Lossky wrote that to reject the Trinity is “spiritual death”, which is “the disintegration of our being” and “hell” (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* ET Fellowship of St Albans and St Sergius [Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1957 (1944)], pp.65-66). Daniel Strange writes of humanity’s “spiritual death penalty” (‘The Many-splendoured Cross: Atonement, Controversy and Victory’, pp.5-23, *Foundations* 54 [Autumn 2005], p.17). Even one of JDS teaching’s critics is prepared to use this language of fallen humans: “We need

Thus JDS teaching seems to be on firm ground in asserting that, according to certain texts, fallen unregenerate humanity is ‘dead’. This accords with a broad stream of biblical thought in which God and his Christ are seen as granting life (Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Psalm 133:3; John 5:21-26; Romans 2:7; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Peter 3:7; etc.), so that to be out of covenant or relationship with God is seen as ‘death’ (Deuteronomy 30:19; John 5:24; Romans 6:13; 1 John 3:14; etc.). It is also clearly an apt metaphor, as fellowship with God brings abundance and fulfilment. However, three words of caution must be noted. First, the Bible itself never collocates ‘spiritual’ with these metaphorical references to ‘death’. Thus suspicion is aroused that to do so might be to ‘compartmentalise’ human existence in a dualistic fashion that is foreign to biblical categories (see further discussion in §§3.2.5; 3.4). Secondly, insofar as either of the two texts studied suggests what this ‘spiritual death’ is, the indications offered do not support the full nexus of meanings that JDS teaching means by the term. While Genesis 2:17 and Ephesians 2:1 may allow for the idea that a ‘spiritually dead’ person is far from God and lost in sin, there is no indication from these texts that a particular relationship with Satan is entailed in the state of death. Full discussion of Satan’s possible involvement in fallen human life lies beyond the limits of this thesis, but the possible role of Satan in Christ’s death will be considered in detail in chapters 5 and 6. A third difficulty is that to accept that the Bible occasionally utilises the metaphor of death in referring to the lostness of humanity without God does not necessarily mean that Jesus experienced the same ‘death’. While an examination of concepts of substitution in the atonement lies beyond the limits of this thesis, study of the following three texts allows for consideration of the possibility that the Bible makes assertions that directly entail *Christ’s* ‘spiritual death’.

3.2.3 Isaiah 53:9

וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רִשְׁעִים קִבְרוֹ וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בָּמֹתָיו

“And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death[s].”

to be born again because we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins.” (Bowman, *Controversy*, p.176).

This text was vital to Kenyon, offering ‘biblical proof’ that Jesus ‘died spiritually’.²⁰ He took the plurality of מָתַיִם (in his death[s]) to indicate the Messiah’s suffering two deaths: physical and spiritual.

It is a very remarkable fact that this is the only time that the word “deaths” is used in the entire Old Testament Scriptures, except when it speaks of Satan’s being cast out of Heaven, that he “died the deaths.” It is used here, because the Prophet saw that our sin Substitute when He went to the Cross died spiritually as well as physically; so it says “in His deaths.”²¹

Copeland follows suit.²² However, other commentators vary in their response. Whybray regards the plural as “meaningless” and follows Albright in emending the Hebrew to ‘his burial ground’.²³ Motyer, however, rejecting the emendation, accepts the plural, regarding it as one of “amplification/majesty”, with the wry comment that the “only remarkable thing about the plural, therefore, is our surprise at finding it.”²⁴ Among critics of JDS teaching, this entirely plausible view that the plural is one of amplification or intensification is accepted by McConnell.²⁵ Bowman also points out the use of an apparently synonymous singular in Isaiah 53:12.²⁶ Thus, given a probably intensive plural at Isaiah 53:9, and a contextual singular at 53:12, this text offers no firm evidence for JDS teaching. Even if the Hebrew in Isaiah 53:9 were semantically as well as grammatically plural, there is of course no indication in the text as to what these two or more deaths might be, and therefore no compelling reason to limit them to two and to designate them as ‘physical’ and ‘spiritual’.

3.2.4 1 Timothy 3:16

Ὁς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι

“God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,” (KJV)

“He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit,” (NRSV)

The second part of this statement contributed to Kenyon’s exposition: Christ’s spiritual justification indicated His prior ‘spiritual’ condemnation and death.

²⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.179.

²¹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.126; cf. p.136; *What Happened*, p.43; *Bible*, p.159.

²² Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-4; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

²³ R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (London: Oliphants, 1975), p.178; cf. J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), p.226.

²⁴ Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), pp.435-436.

²⁵ McConnell, *Promise*, p.128; cf. Bowman, *Controversy*, p.164. McIntyre, a supporter of Kenyon, concedes this point (*Kenyon*, p.340).

²⁶ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.165.

In 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul tells us that He was justified in spirit. He could not be Justified until He was first condemned, and we know that He was not Justified until the claims of Justice had been fully satisfied; then the edict comes from the Throne of God, and our Substitute stands legally acquitted in the presence of the demons in Hell. Next He is given Eternal Life, and He that was Spiritually dead and under Satan's Dominion is now made alive in spirit.²⁷

Quite apart from some of the more bizarre suggestions in this excerpt, which will be discussed in later chapters, Kenyon's understanding of ἐδικαιώθη is problematic, and may rest upon the English translation or translations available to him at the time. Recognising a variety of past understandings, modern commentators largely concur that ἐδικαιώθη in this context is best understood as 'was vindicated', and that the event in view here is Christ's physical resurrection. The vindication is not perceived as an improvement in Christ's standing before God, but as a statement by God that Christ's claims were true.²⁸

3.2.5 1 Peter 3:18

θανατωθεῖς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεῖς δὲ πνεύματι

"He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit" (NRSV).

The superficial amenability of this text to JDS teaching is immediately obvious, and both Kenyon and Copeland use it. Copeland explains their reasoning simply and briefly: "If He was made alive in His spirit, He must have been spiritually dead."²⁹ At least one New Testament commentator has concurred. Kenneth Wuest (1893-1962), professor of New Testament Greek at Moody Bible Institute, wrote: "To make alive Christ's human spirit presupposes the death of that human spirit."³⁰ If JDS teachers and Wuest are right in seeing Peter³¹ refer to 'a making alive of Christ's

²⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.138; cf. p.133; *Bible*, p.166; *What Happened*, pp.62-64.

²⁸ I. H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), p.525; George W. Knight III (*The Pastoral Epistles* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992), pp.184-185; Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1984), p.94; A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), pp.85-86; P. H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), p.99, many with reference to Romans 1:4. M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann (*The Pastoral Epistles* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972], p.62) agree about the translation 'vindicated', but refer to Christ's exaltation.

²⁹ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1; also Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.64; *Father*, p.138.

³⁰ K. S. Wuest, *First Peter in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1942), p.95.

³¹ By 'Peter' is simply meant the author of 1 Peter.

spirit’ while perhaps the body remained dead, in other words in seeing a dualistic anthropology here, then this text might indeed imply that Christ ‘died spiritually’.³²

Most commentators, however, while recognising this passage’s difficulties, do not relate ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι to a ‘spiritual resurrection’ that can be distinguished from the physical. Some of their reasons are stronger than others. For Feinberg, the “problem is that immaterial substances do not die, so they cannot be brought back to life.”³³ This presupposes an ontology of ‘spirit’ which may be foreign to the text. Elliott’s reasoning is opaque: “Nor can *sarx* and *pneuma*, as pointed out by Michaels (1988, 204), denote differing material and immaterial parts of Christ’s person (his ‘body’ and ‘soul’), since each is associated with a different verb.”³⁴ It is difficult to see why a difference in the relevant verbs prevents the datives from denoting ‘with respect to Christ’s flesh/spirit’.

Though Elliott indicates that he is following Michaels, the latter actually expresses his reasoning rather differently, and arguably more cogently:

Any attempt to distinguish between ζωοποιηθεὶς πνεύματι and Jesus’ bodily resurrection must do so by showing that only Jesus’ “soul” or “spirit” was quickened while his body remained in the tomb, and this... is not borne out by Peter’s *σαρκί-πνεύματι* distinction.³⁵

Michaels proceeds to indicate that Peter’s distinction is “not between the material and immaterial parts of Christ’s person... but rather between his earthly existence and his risen state.”³⁶ Similar to Michaels’ reasoning, but more simply expressed, is Davids’. He points out that Christ “died as a whole person, not simply as a body”, and thus His resurrection is to be seen as that of His whole person.³⁷ Goppelt concurs: “Die Begriffe „Fleisch“ und „Geist“... bezeichnen nicht wie für die

³² There are other possible explanations, however. Bo Reicke (*The Disobedient Spirits and Christian Baptism* [Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1946]), who did not consider that Peter was interested in ontological anthropology (p.107), wrote (p.106),

If now it really says in verse 18 that Christ was brought to life ‘as regards’ the spirit, ... [i]t is then actually the spirit itself which is brought to life (which, of course, does not here imply that it passes from death to life, for the spirit has never been dead, but only that it becomes the bearer of the new Life which follows upon humiliation of the body).

³³ J. S. Feinberg, ‘1 Peter 3:18-20, Ancient Mythology, and the Intermediate State’, pp.303-336, *Westminster Theological Journal*, 48 (1986), pp.314-315.

³⁴ J. H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), p.645.

³⁵ J. R. Michaels, *1 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), p.204.

³⁶ Michaels, *1 Peter*, p.204; against, e.g., A. M. Stibbs & A. F. Walls, *1 Peter* (TNTC. Leicester: IVP, 1959), pp.141-142.

³⁷ P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), p.137.

griechische Tradition Bestandteile des Menschen.”³⁸ In effect, Michaels, Davids and Goppelt are challenging an anthropologically dualistic reading of 3:18, of which the JDS reading is a clear example, with a monistic one.

Whether Peter’s anthropology is monistic or dualistic is moot. The clearest parallel to 3:18 is 4:6 (κριθῶσι μὲν... σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ... πνεύματι). However, it is so close that it simply reinforces the uncertainty, rather than resolving it. Other passages are clearer. In favour of monism, Michaels’ reference to ‘earthly existence’ accords with the obvious meaning of σαρκὶ in 4:2 (NRSV: “earthly life”; cf. 1:24), which is thus probably also the implicit meaning of the term in 4:1, where Christ’s παθόντος σαρκὶ parallels the θανατωθεὶς σαρκὶ of 3:18. The inference is that in these cases, the word σάρξ does not denote some ‘compartment’ in a dualistic human makeup, but rather this earthly human life in its fulness. Similarly, Peter’s use of σῶμα at 2:24 may display monism. However, at 3:21 σάρξ does more obviously refer to the physical body, and limits the significance of its cleanliness in comparison to the importance of a clean conscience. This seems more dualistic. Given the uncertainties in 1 Peter, a wider investigation into biblical anthropology is called for.

The Bible has traditionally been assumed to present a consistently dualistic anthropology. Augustine, Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Calvin believed that they were reproducing biblical ideas when they distinguished sharply between the material and immaterial aspects of human makeup.³⁹ However, since the middle of the twentieth century a sustained assault on these assumptions has been mounted by biblical scholars. Their criticisms of the dualist case are concisely summarised by Cooper: biblical authors were not attempting to present anthropological data that were philosophically precise; they frequently used synecdoche, whereby a seeming part of human makeup denoted the whole; anthropological terms were often used interchangeably; where anthropological terms were not used interchangeably, they

³⁸ Leonhard Goppelt, *Der erste Petrusbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), pp.244-245.

³⁹ Augustine, ‘On the Soul and its Origin’ e.g. IV.4 (*NPNF* I/V, p.355); ‘On the Trinity’ XI.1 (*NPNF* I/III, p.144); Luther, *The Magnificat*, (*LW* 21, pp.303-304); John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I/XV, 2 ET Henry Beveridge (London: James Clarke & Co., 1962), vol.I, pp.160-161. Augustine’s Platonism undoubtedly affected his reading of the scriptures. The Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274) gave him a different outlook. See John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting* (Leicester: Apollos, 2nd edn 2000 [1989]), pp.10-13.

were being used functionally, not ontologically; where the soul or spirit was said to leave the body at death, this may simply have meant that the life was over ('leaving'), rather than that an incorporeal 'substance' was leaving the body to survive outwith and without it; and finally, the Pauline distinction between 'spirit' and 'flesh' was not between the immaterial and material.⁴⁰

In place of dualistic assumptions has come a widespread conviction that the Bible presents an essentially monist anthropology. Early advocates of this position highlighted the monism of both Hebrew and Pauline thought. John A.T. Robinson quoted Wheeler-Robinson approvingly: to a Hebrew, a person was "an animated body, not an incarnated soul."⁴¹ He went on to declare that for Paul, "σῶμα... does not mean simply something external to a man [*sic*] himself, something he *has*. It is what he *is*."⁴² Bultmann's study of Pauline theology similarly concluded that for Paul 'my body' characteristically equalled 'I'.⁴³ More recently, Dunn concurs with respect to Paul's use of 'soul'.⁴⁴ Various commentators extrapolate this conclusion to the whole of the New Testament.⁴⁵

However, there has alongside this change of perspective been a recognition that in Paul's writing, where most of the relevant New Testament material lies, there is in fact a flexibility. While much of his thought seems monist, at times it can sound dualist. Bultmann noted this in 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 and 12.⁴⁶ Others have followed suit.⁴⁷ The anthropological variety is perhaps unsurprising, in the light of the observation, regularly repeated in the literature, that biblical writers were not seeking to present a carefully crafted and coherent anthropology, but were writing occasional and pragmatic documents.

⁴⁰ Cooper, *Body*, pp.96-99.

⁴¹ John A. T. Robinson, *The Body* (London: SCM, 1952), p.14.

⁴² Robinson, *Body*, p.28, italics original.

⁴³ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament Volume I* ET Kendrick Grobel (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp.192-194.

⁴⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), p.76.

⁴⁵ E.g. Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1983), p.140; Bruce Reichenbach, quoted in Cooper, *Body*, p.100.

⁴⁶ Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.192, 201-202; cf. Robinson, *Body*, p.77.

⁴⁷ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999 [1998]), pp.xxiii-xxix; PHEME PERKINS, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp.33-34; E. Schweizer, 'πνεῦμα' (*TDNT* VI, p.434); Reichenbach, quoted in Cooper, *Body*, p.100.

With this in mind, attention can now return to 1 Peter 3:18. If an entirely consistent anthropology had been found elsewhere in the Bible, it might be reasonable to suggest that 1 Peter was aligned to it. However, this is not the case. Instead, Paul's flexibility merely reinforces the uncertainty. Peter may have been monist or dualist, or may even have betrayed both tendencies in the one letter. There is therefore no justification in claiming that a dualist reading of the text is necessarily untrue to Peter's intention. On the other hand, it cannot be claimed that a dualist reading is *the* correct exegesis. An 'open verdict' must be recorded as to whether 1 Peter 3:18 suggests that Jesus 'died spiritually' or not.

3.2.6 Conclusion to section 3.2

Five passages have been surveyed, referring to humanity or to Christ. It has been shown that the clearest allusion among them to some sort of 'spiritual death' is to that of pre-Christians in Ephesians 2:1. Of those taken to refer to Christ, Isaiah 53:9 and 1 Timothy 3:16 simply do not suggest that Christ 'died spiritually'. The plural in Isaiah 53:9 has nothing to do with a pair of deaths, 'physical' and 'spiritual'. 1 Timothy 3:16, does not speak of a 'justification' of a previously condemned, and therefore 'spiritually dead', Christ. In fact, the JDS reading of these texts provides more information about JDS exegesis than it does about the texts in question, for it illustrates the naïvety of the exegetical work that leads to these conclusions. Immediately, the observer of JDS teaching is alerted that other texts might be handled with a similar lack of skill.

1 Peter 3:18 offers possible support to JDS doctrine, but no certainty. If the JDS reading is given the benefit of the doubt, then 1 Peter 3:18 declares that Christ was made alive in spirit ('spiritually'), and must therefore have previously been 'spiritually dead'. This result of a search for biblical statements that Christ thus died is hardly overwhelming. Given the New Testament's sustained focus, in various ways, on Christ's death, the extraordinary paucity of direct reference to a distinct 'spiritual' aspect of this death might surely warn a JDS teacher that his or her

teaching does not reflect biblical material to any significant extent.⁴⁸ Again, the observer of JDS teaching is learning more about the weaknesses of JDS exegesis than about Christ's death. It emerged in §2.4.1 that the approach of JDS teaching to scriptural testimony makes little allowance for the possibility that different biblical authors might have had different perspectives on the death of Christ. There is no overt concession, for instance, that Peter might have a view of the crucifixion and its aftermath that was in some respects distinctive rather than entirely conforming to other epistolary authors. Of course, JDS teachers believe that Christ's 'spiritual death' is entailed by more texts than 1 Peter 3:18. However, there is the suspicion that even if it was the only text to declare or entail this, no real distinction would be drawn between "1 Peter says..." and "the Bible says..." The possibility of a plurality of perspectives is effectively denied. Furthermore, and importantly, it must not be assumed that Peter meant by the notion of Jesus' 'dying spiritually' what JDS teachers mean.

Conversely, of course, if the benefit of the doubt is not given to JDS teaching, then the conclusion to this section is simple: no direct statement that Christ 'died spiritually' has been found in the Bible. Care must be exercised, however, in applying this conclusion. From it cannot be derived the statement, "JDS teaching is unbiblical." The fact that the Bible does not state in so many words that Jesus 'died spiritually' does not prevent the possibility that the Bible *does* teach the three ideas that JDS doctrine incorporates: in his 'spiritual death', Jesus was separated from God; partook of a sinful, satanic nature; and became Satan's prey. Any biblical testimony to these concepts will be considered individually in §§4.2.5; 4.4.2; 5.5.2-5.5.4; 6.4.2-6.4.4.

3.3 Historical references to 'spiritual death'

While JDS teaching itself merely takes an overt interest in biblical data, its debaters, as emerged in §§1.6.3; 1.7.1; 1.7.3; 2.5, consider Kenyon's possible non-biblical sources. McConnell in particular believes that certain distinctives in JDS doctrine

⁴⁸ See Hanegraaff's similar criticism in *Crisis*, pp.161-162, though his observation is written with the uncritical assumption, shared by JDS teaching, that New Testament anthropology is as dualistic as his own.

were sourced by Kenyon not in the Bible but in New Thought and Christian Science. McConnell does not claim that any New Thought spokesperson stated that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ in so many words, any more than Kenyon claimed that the Bible does. However, he does believe that these sources presented to Kenyon a ‘spiritualised’ view of Christ’s death, which Kenyon then incorporated into his own teaching. In sharp contrast to this idea is that of McIntyre, who claims that Kenyon’s JDS teaching was in at least broad conformity with teaching about Christ’s death circulating among Christians from the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements. This section will consider both groups of possible sources, in order to investigate McConnell’s and McIntyre’s opposing theses. §3.3.1 will test McConnell’s position by seeking references to ‘spiritual death’ within New Thought and Christian Science. §3.3.2 will review McIntyre’s research into influences on Kenyon where reference to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ is evident. §3.3.3 will look further afield than McIntyre did, seeking further references to Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ among several other Higher Life and Faith Cure teachers who influenced Kenyon.

3.3.1 Jesus⁴⁹ ‘spiritual death’ in New Thought and Christian Science

Having briefly reviewed JDS teaching, McConnell states:

It is not surprising that the metaphysical cults also deny that Jesus’ physical death atones for sin. Mary Baker Eddy states that “the material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin, when it was shed upon the ‘accursed tree’ than when it was flowing in His veins.” She referred to the idea that God’s wrath must be propitiated by physical sacrifice as a “heathen conception.” Kenyon’s commitment to such metaphysical concepts made it impossible for him to believe that Christ’s physical sufferings on the cross could be sufficient to win man’s [*sic*] redemption without some supposedly more significant spiritual suffering in the spiritual realm. This spiritualization of Jesus’ death, whether implicit (as in the Faith theology), or explicit (as in metaphysics), destroys the very core of the gospel. It is cultic and heretical.⁵⁰

Thus it is necessary to explore whether New Thought proponents and Christian Scientists did indeed ‘spiritualise’ Jesus’ death. The writers to be reviewed were introduced in §2.5.1, where reasons for their choice were also set out. They are P. P. Quimby, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mary Baker Eddy, and Ralph Waldo Trine.

⁴⁹ Reference here to ‘Jesus’ rather than ‘Christ’ is deliberate, as some of these writers, unlike JDS teachers, distinguished between the human Jesus and the impersonal divine ‘Christ’ within him.

⁵⁰ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120. Quotations from Eddy are from *Science*, p.330, and *No and Yes* (Boston, MA: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1887), pp.44-45.

New Thought and Christian Science have no doctrines of sin requiring vicarious atonement,⁵¹ and thus offer various other soteriologies. Direct comparison between their soteriologies and ‘orthodox’ Christian views concerning the death of Jesus is considerably complicated by the meanings that these groups attach to the terms ‘God’, ‘Christ’, ‘Jesus’ and ‘death’. Caution in gathering evidence and tentativeness in offering conclusions is therefore required.

To Quimby, Jesus’ mission was solely as a healer:

All will admit that a person can be deceived into a belief and his belief make him sick. They will also admit that to correct his error or belief will make him well. This process is all that Jesus ever intended to convey to the world. This is a science and can be learned... Death is an idea or matter and all the acts of science destroy death and lead to life and happiness.⁵²

Quimby believed that he understood Jesus’ teaching on death. In His resurrection,

Jesus would not allow that he was a spirit but that he had flesh and bones as he had before he was crucified. So he either told a falsehood or his dead body rose, and if that rose, he did give people to believe a lie, for he said as touching the dead, God is not the God of the dead but the living. He also said, They that rise from the dead, not that they rise, etc. Now all this seems like a contradiction. So it is, if you take the Christian’s explanation. But if you will take Jesus’ explanation, it is clear, for he never had any idea of death as the Christians say he had; his ideas were at variance with all the world. He never taught any other world as was believed by the religious Jews. He made man up of ideas.⁵³

The above quotations indicate that Quimby’s view of death, despite his believing that it agreed with Jesus’, was not that of historic Christianity. Moving to Jesus’ own death, Quimby believed in the physical crucifixion of the human Jesus. His views about ‘the Christ’ were considerably more esoteric:

Christ was crucified at the death of Jesus and laid in the tomb of Joseph's new doctrines, not with the body of Jesus. The Jews crucified Christ by their false religion and the masses crucified the man Jesus, so Christ in the tomb of every true disciple had the Christ lying in his breast crucified by the world of opinions.

⁵¹ Ralph Waldo Trine, *The Man who Knew* [Electronic Edition: Cornerstone Publishing, 2001 (1936)], ch.15, accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm>; Eddy, *Science*, pp.11, 24.

⁵² P. P. Quimby, ‘Jesus’ Healing and His Mission’ (1860, accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm> through ‘Other Quimby Writings Online’).

⁵³ P. P. Quimby, ‘What Is Death?’ (1863, accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm> through ‘Other Quimby Writings Online’). At least when taken at face value, Quimby’s ideas about Jesus and death involved contradiction. He could write that Jesus “disbelieved in death, in heaven and hell”, and state in the next paragraph that, for Jesus, “Man must be born again in order to enter heaven.” While Quimby may have meant different concepts by the term ‘heaven’ in these two statements, he did not clarify this. In the same document he wrote, “In the wisdom of Jesus, the word death means simply the change from brutish ignorance to a higher state of knowledge” (P. P. Quimby, ‘Jesus, His Belief or Wisdom’ [1862, accessed 30.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm> through ‘Other Quimby Writings Online’]).

This Christ is the one that Jesus Christ spoke of, not of the flesh and blood that the people saw by their natural eyes. So all the truth that came through the man Jesus was Christ and it was the garment of Jesus. So Jesus was clothed with the gospel or wisdom of God. When the error murdered the man, they stole the body of Christ and parted His garments or wisdom among them, while the people believed that the flesh and blood that was laid in the tomb was the one that they heard, when it was nothing but the medium of the one whom they never saw, only in a mystery. This same Christ rose again and is still in the world of matter reconciling the world of error to the science of God.⁵⁴

This confused and confusing writing offers no notion which entails a ‘spiritual death’ of Jesus.

Emerson’s ideas, as esoteric as Quimby’s, had no more in common than his with historic Christianity. According to Geldard, Emerson did not look to Jesus for salvation. Jesus was merely, along with Moses and Buddha, “fully enlightened”.⁵⁵ Thus, though Emerson wrote about God, he did not write much about Christ or Christianity. When he did, he was critical of the latter’s focus on the former:

Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for ages, it is not the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus. The soul knows no persons.⁵⁶

Although Emerson’s claim that humans are incarnations of the divine⁵⁷ is echoed in Kenyon’s work, the sources of JDS language are not to be found in Emerson’s writings.

Eddy wrote far more about Jesus than did Emerson. Nevertheless, her soteriology, like Quimby’s and Emerson’s, departed utterly from that of historic ‘orthodox’ Christianity. Her references to redemption from matter echo themes familiar from classical Gnosticism: “Jesus aided in reconciling man to God by giving man a truer sense of Love, the divine Principle of Jesus’ teachings, and this truer sense of Love redeems man from the law of matter, sin and death”; “To be on communicable terms with the Spirit, persons must be free from organic bodies”; and “the crucifixion of

⁵⁴ Horatio W. Dresser, ed., *The Quimby Manuscripts* (Electronic Edition: Cornerstone Books, 2000 [1921]), ch.16, accessed 28.1.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm>.

⁵⁵ Geldard, *Teachings*, pp.26, 54, quoting p.54.

⁵⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘Divinity School Address’, 1838, accessed 24.3.05 from <http://cornerstone.wwwhubs.com/framepage.htm>. Italics original.

⁵⁷ “Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets... He saw that God incarnates himself in man” (Emerson, ‘Address’).

Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal life, even the Allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.”⁵⁸

To the extent that comparisons can be drawn, Eddy did teach that Jesus engaged in a spiritual offering: “The spiritual essence of blood is sacrifice. The efficacy of Jesus’ spiritual offering is infinitely greater than can be expressed by our sense of human blood.”⁵⁹ However, she denied that a ‘spiritual death’ could be possible in his case:

Jesus could give his temporal life into his enemies’ hands; but when his earth-mission was accomplished, his spiritual life, indestructible and eternal, was found forever the same. He knew that matter had no life and that real Life is God; therefore he could no more be separated from his spiritual life than God could be extinguished.⁶⁰

Trine’s soteriology involved conversion from fear, sickness and lack to peace, power and plenty through the force of thought’s rule over material circumstances. This especially required the realisation that all humans are part of the Infinite Life, Power and Wisdom called ‘God’.⁶¹ Jesus occupied an important place in Trine’s scheme, though he expressed concern, like Emerson before him, that Christians might focus too much on Jesus’ person.⁶² Though Trine used the word ‘at-one-ment’, and referred to Jesus as ‘Saviour’, this salvation was not achieved through the crucifixion, but through revelation of oneness with ‘God’:

By coming into this complete realization of His oneness with the Father, by mastering, absolutely mastering every circumstance that crossed His path through life, even to the death of the body, and by pointing out to us the great laws which are the same for us as they were for Him, He has given us an ideal of life, an ideal for us to attain to *here and now*, that we could not have without Him. *One has conquered first; all may conquer afterward*. By completely realizing it first for Himself, and then by pointing out to others this great law of the at-one-ment with the Father, He has become the world’s greatest Saviour.⁶³

⁵⁸ Eddy, *Science*, pp.19, 74, 497; cf. ‘Nag Hammadi’, *The Treatise on the Resurrection* 45:40-46:2; 46:22-47:24; 47:37-48:3; *A Valentinian Exposition* 35:28-37; *On Baptism B* throughout (James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* [ET New York: HarperCollins, rev. ed. 1990 (1978)] pp.55-56, 486, 488; also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I.21.4,5 (*ANF* I, pp.346-347). Larry Hurtado is, however, wisely cautious about the extent to which the Nag Hammadi texts may be taken to reflect the earlier varieties of Gnosticism that Irenaeus criticised (*Lord Jesus Christ* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], pp.533-538).

⁵⁹ Eddy, *Science*, p.25.

⁶⁰ Eddy, *Science*, p.51; cf. *No*, pp.44-45.

⁶¹ Trine, *Infinite*, especially pp.174, 191, 195, 200. The book’s alternative title is: *Fullness of Peace Power and Plenty*.

⁶² Trine, *Infinite*, p.150.

⁶³ Trine, *Infinite*, p.150, italics original.

While Trine accepted that Jesus died, he denied a ‘spiritual death’, if such be defined in terms of abandonment by God:

He understood thoroughly why he was dying; it was a part of his plan sanctioned by the love and wisdom of his Father that he should give his life for the sealing of his truth. He knew even here that he would have the same care and guidance of the Father that he had always had, and that He would not desert him.⁶⁴

In conclusion to this section, it is abundantly clear that, whatever concepts Kenyon may have gained from New Thought and Christian Science, he did not find direct statements concerning Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ there. Also, McConnell’s references to the implicit spiritualisation of Jesus’ death in JDS teaching and its explicit spiritualisation in New Thought and Christian Science suggest a far greater similarity between their ideas than actually exists. None of the latter’s teaching about Jesus’ death bears even a remote similarity to that found in JDS teaching. In fact, Eddy and Trine explicitly deny some of the ideas lying behind Kenyon’s term. Thus one can conclude that Kenyon did not learn that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ from direct statements or broad concepts in New Thought and Christian Science. The following subsections consider whether he learnt it from the teaching of those around him whose ideas conformed to historic mainstream Christianity more than New Thought did.

3.3.2 McIntyre’s research into references to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’

Of research into ‘orthodox’ references to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ antecedent to or contemporary with Kenyon, the most significant is that of McIntyre, himself a JDS teacher and supportive of Kenyon. McIntyre seeks to defend Kenyon stoutly against McConnell’s criticisms, regarding Kenyon’s JDS teaching as beneficial, and fundamentally continuous with a line of teaching stretching back for centuries:

Many people since the Reformation had taught about the spiritual sufferings of Christ... Their similarity to Kenyon’s teaching may be shocking to those who thought Kenyon’s teachings were unusual or unique!

* * * * *

Although Kenyon first saw this truth of Christ dying spiritually by revelation of the Holy Spirit, this was a fairly widely taught concept in the circles in which Kenyon moved. Many of his favorite Bible teachers taught it. They did not see it quite the same as Kenyon, but the essential idea – that Christ’s sufferings were

⁶⁴ Trine, *Man*, ch.16.

more than physical in the work of the atonement – was not an uncommon teaching at all.⁶⁵

McIntyre's search for references to a 'more than physical' death notes the Calvinist milieu of New England, in which Kenyon ministered for decades.⁶⁶ McIntyre thus searches back as far as Calvin, finding a number of similar terms used of Christ's suffering: 'eternal death' (Calvin⁶⁷); 'soul-death' (London preacher C. H. Spurgeon: 1834-1892); 'spiritual agony' (British minister R. W. Dale: 1829-1895); 'essential death' (British Congregationalist G. Campbell Morgan: 1863-1945). In these cases, as is clear from McIntyre's lengthy quotations, when the authors indicated what they meant by these phrases, they referred to Christ's separation from God, this often arising from their understanding of the cry, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).⁶⁸ With the exception of Calvin, and Campbell Morgan who often spoke at the Northfield conferences attended by Kenyon,⁶⁹ McIntyre offers no evidence that these authors influenced Kenyon, though it is plausible that they may have done.

Of particular possible significance among McIntyre's discussion of predecessors and contemporaries of Kenyon, however, is his research into Henry C. Mabie (1847-1918), who wrote precisely of Jesus' 'spiritual death'. Mabie was a doctor of divinity, Home Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, and influential among Higher Life advocates, speaking regularly at the Northfield conferences.⁷⁰ McIntyre is joined by Lie in considering Mabie, but McIntyre's discussion is more detailed.⁷¹ McIntyre refers to three books Mabie wrote on the atonement, including *The Meaning and Message of the Cross*, in which, McIntyre observes, Mabie wrote of "the spiritual death which Christ experienced."⁷² Mabie meant by 'spiritual death',

⁶⁵ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.182, 183-184. McIntyre's desire both to highlight Kenyon's conformity and to defend his receptivity to 'revelation of the Holy Spirit' is notable.

⁶⁶ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.186.

⁶⁷ According to Kenyon himself, "Calvin said that Jesus had to go to Hell.... Calvin taught that Jesus had to suffer in our stead." (unpublished sermon preached at First Presbyterian Church, Hollywood, CA on 27.8.1944; supplied by Lie, personal correspondence, 28.7.06).

⁶⁸ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, ch.17.

⁶⁹ McIntyre, personal correspondence, 1.8.06; *Kenyon*, p.86.

⁷⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.192-195.

⁷¹ Lie, 'Theology', p.98. Lie is largely dependent upon McIntyre (Lie, 'Theology', p.98, n.77).

⁷² McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.194.

when applied to Adam and Eve, both “separation from” and “moral unlikeness to” God:

The death which our first parents in the garden died involved more than mere mortal dissolution, the separation of soul and body. Such a separation indeed was entailed, but sin itself effects spiritual death, soul-death; not annihilation but a perversion of the functions normal to personality, eventuating in moral unlikeness to God and separation from Him. Such a separation in fellowship between the soul and its God, itself is death in the profoundest sense: it is the destruction of the very possibility of God-likeness resulting in malformation and reprobacy of spiritual being. All this and vastly more is involved in spiritual death.

However, when he then applied the term to Christ, he only referred to “separation from God”:

Surely no less a death than that spiritual one which I have represented Christ as experiencing, could have power to “bring to nought” such an adversary, as declared to have had “the power of death.” As by sin came death, and so by death the bond of Satan was cast about all mankind; so through death – death of an infinitely profound sort – Jesus has destroyed even him that had the power of death, and potentially set free all his intended victims ... Thus, it was that self-imposed death – the voluntary tasting of spiritual separation from God – which constituted the reconciliation.⁷³

McIntyre recognises difficulties in determining the extent to which Mabie’s teaching affected Kenyon, but is justifiably confident that Kenyon would have heard Mabie preach at Northfield in “Kenyon’s theologically formative years (1894-1897)”, and, though he is not able to supply any evidence that Kenyon read *The Meaning and Message of the Cross*, he has found that Kenyon preached in 1928 that he had read Mabie’s *How Does the Death of Christ Save Us?*⁷⁴ This work, written at least partly in response to the moral influence view of the atonement,⁷⁵ also mentioned Christ’s ‘spiritual death’, as McIntyre notes without quotation. Commenting on Christ’s words recorded in Matthew 27:46, Mabie wrote:

To greater depths of condescending love even Deity could not go. Yet to such a length of voluntary humiliation and conscious woe God did go. This the Scriptures say “became Him” (Heb. ii. 10). Nor could he so suffer without tasting for the time the bitterness of all that we conceive as involved in spiritual death.

* * * * *

There was, of course, no sin in him to deserve the least he suffered, much less the worst. But by the depth of his knowledge, the fulness of his sympathy, and the largeness of his capacity of self-humiliation, he grasped and endured in kind

⁷³ H. C. Mabie, *The Meaning and Message of the Cross* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1906), pp.66-67, 74, 83-84, quoted in McIntyre, *Kenyon*, pp.193-194; italics removed.

⁷⁴ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.192.

⁷⁵ Henry C. Mabie, *How Does the Death of Christ Save Us?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Publishers, 1908), pp.1-2.

everything denoted by death – death of the body, death of the soul, and death of the spirit.⁷⁶

Perhaps, then, Kenyon built JDS teaching on the foundation of Mabie's ideas. Two factors, however, militate against the certainty of this conclusion. As McIntyre notes,⁷⁷ the publication dates of *The Meaning and Message of the Cross*, 1906, and *How Does the Death of Christ Save Us?*, 1908, post-dated the year, 1900, when Kenyon began to teach JDS. Admittedly, Mabie might well have been using this language prior to publishing these books, but McIntyre offers no evidence for this. Furthermore, Lie observes that when Kenyon mentioned Mabie in 1928, he preached that Mabie's understanding of Christ's suffering did not extend significantly beyond the physical,⁷⁸ and McIntyre has to confess that Kenyon either did not realise or did not admit that he and Mabie were in any great agreement on this matter.⁷⁹ Even if Kenyon was in some way dependent on Mabie, it is clear that of Kenyon's three concepts inherent to JDS teaching, Mabie only taught the first – separation from God – in relation to Christ, whatever he may have believed concerning fallen humanity's 'spiritual death'.

The second reference to Christ's 'spiritual death' contemporary with Kenyon that McIntyre offers is actually a quotation in Mabie's writing, of Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910):

We are not to set the physical sufferings of Christ in separation from, or contrast with, the spiritual agonies, but let us not suppose that the physical death was the atonement, apart from the spiritual death of separation from the Father, which is witnessed by that cry of despair mingled with trust that broke the darkness.⁸⁰

MacLaren preached in Britain. Published works may have reached and been read by Kenyon, and this may have been before Kenyon began to teach JDS, as MacLaren's sermons were published from as early as 1869.⁸¹ However, MacLaren's exposition of Christ's death was by no means dominated by JDS language. He wrote of Christ's 'real death': "But this we know: that our sins, not His, wove the veil which separated

⁷⁶ Mabie, *Death*, pp.40-41.

⁷⁷ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.193.

⁷⁸ Lie, 'Theology', p.98.

⁷⁹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.193.

⁸⁰ Alexander MacLaren, quoted in McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.194.

⁸¹ Alexander MacLaren, *Sermons Preached in Manchester: First Series* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1869).

Him from His God. Such separation is the real death.”⁸² However, much of his preaching about the crucifixion did not even approximate to JDS teaching,⁸³ even though he unsurprisingly used the language of death about unregenerate humanity: “Without Him, we are dead whilst we live.”⁸⁴ What MacLaren’s use, albeit limited, of the term ‘spiritual death’ in relation to Christ indicates is that Mabie, by quoting it, was not under the impression that he had invented the term, and, furthermore, if Kenyon *did* adopt the term from Mabie he in turn might not have regarded it as the isolated teaching of Mabie, perceiving that it had a usage going further back among preachers and teachers of the day.⁸⁵

However, though Mabie was able to quote a preacher who used the term, he wrote of Christ ‘dying spiritually’ in a way suggesting that his language was not familiar, and that he was presenting the language and associated ideas cautiously. For instance, he included the words ‘which we conceive’ in: “The spiritual death which we conceive Christ to have undergone was so dire a thing that it resulted... in actual heart rupture on the physical side.”⁸⁶ It is also notable that Mabie carefully introduced the idea with references to, more generally, a ‘deeper death’: “On the supposition of the deeper death, which a little later we shall predicate of Jesus, we provide for organic, vital power in that death.”⁸⁷ Such care does not suggest that Mabie regarded

⁸² Alexander MacLaren, *St Mark Chapters IX to XVI* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1906), p.235.

⁸³ E.g. ‘The Cross the Proof of the Love of God’, sermon accessed 18.2.05 from www.txdirect.net/~tgarner/amac2.htm; ‘Love and Fear’, sermon accessed 18.2.05 from www.txdirect.net/~tgarner/maclaren8.htm; ‘The Disciple’s Confession and the Master’s Warning’, sermon accessed 18.2.05 from www.puritansermons.com/sermons/discip.htm.

⁸⁴ Alexander MacLaren, ‘The Absent Present Christ’, sermon accessed 18.2.05 from www.txdirect.net/~tgarner/amac5.htm.

⁸⁵ A third early reference to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ identified by JDS teachers is in A. R. Fausset’s writings. Edwards discusses exegesis of Hebrews 2:9 (Edwards, ‘The Divine Son: Part 1’). He quotes Fausset’s contribution to Jamieson, Fausset and Brown’s commentary: “‘Taste death’ implies personal experimental undergoing it: death of body, and death (spiritually) of soul, in His being forsaken of the Father” (A. R. Fausset, ‘1 Corinthians to Revelation’, Vol.VI, Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1945 (1869)], p.531). There is neither claim nor evidence, however, that Kenyon was aware of or influenced by this further British contribution to views of Christ’s death (Fausset was Irish but ministered in England. Jamieson and Brown were both Scottish [Wilbur M. Smith, ‘Biographical and Bibliographical Foreword’, Vol.I, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Commentary*]).

⁸⁶ Mabie, *Death*, p.45; cf. Mabie’s reference to the “spiritual one [death] which I have represented Christ as experiencing...” (Mabie, *Meaning*, quoted in McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.194).

⁸⁷ Mabie, *Death*, p.26; cf. pp.28 (“death below death”); 36 (“far deeper than physical dying”); Henry C. Mabie, *The Divine Reason of the Cross* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1911), p.164 (“death in every sense”).

language about Jesus' 'spiritual death' as a well worn path for him to tread. Whether references to Christ's 'spiritual death' were in fact common in the Higher Life movement to which Mabie belonged will be explored in §3.3.3.

In conclusion, McIntyre successfully indicates that the application of such terms as 'spiritual death' to Christ was not unique, among his 'orthodox' contemporaries and forebears, to Kenyon. The language was used by Mabie and MacLaren. This is an important finding, for it is the first time that such references have been identified at all in any sources that Kenyon himself might plausibly have drawn from. However, McIntyre has offered no direct evidence that Kenyon gained his language or ideas from these sources. Even Mabie's influence, superficially the most likely, presents difficulties, as discussed.

Also, it is clear that what Kenyon conveyed when he referred to Christ's 'spiritual death' went beyond what those contemporaries meant. Kenyon agreed that Christ endured, for humanity, separation from God. But Kenyon meant more: first, Christ endured participation in Satan's nature; secondly, Christ became Satan's prey (see chapters 5 and 6). Of these ideas there is no hint. McIntyre's defence of Kenyon is silent on this important point, and thereby weakened. True, McIntyre does not claim that the sources he researches hold to precisely the same view as Kenyon. Nonetheless, he does claim a coincidence of concepts as well as language, writing of these sources that "to believe that Christ's separation from the Father was essential to our redemption is to believe that Christ died spiritually."⁸⁸ This claim does not take account of the fact that Kenyon's meaning of the 'spiritual death' of Christ involved his less usual concepts.

3.3.3 Other Higher Life and Faith Cure portrayals of Christ's death

A further limitation of McIntyre's reported research is that it only identifies, in a chapter entitled 'Concurring Voices on the Sufferings of Christ',⁸⁹ occasions where ideas and language similar to Kenyon's *have been found*. It offers no comment on the *absence*, if such is the case, of these ideas and terms more widely among the teachers

⁸⁸ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.341, n.2.

⁸⁹ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, ch.17.

whom Kenyon listened to or read, and who arguably influenced Kenyon the most. Therefore it does not provide a balanced sense of the degree to which Kenyon may have been exposed to this language and ideation. It is thus necessary to consider how widespread such use was among individuals held in high regard by Kenyon. §2.5.2 introduced and justified the inclusion of: A. J. Gordon, who was a close friend of Mabie;⁹⁰ Carrie Judd Montgomery; Andrew Murray; A. T. Pierson; A. B. Simpson; R. A. Torrey; and George D. Watson.

References to a ‘spiritual death’ in these teachers’ depictions of the crucifixion is notable by its consistent absence.⁹¹ The nearest terminological approach is Watson’s reference to ‘soul death’ in his *Our Own God*, published in 1904, but conceived in 1896.⁹²

In His soul, He endured God’s wrath against sin, and in His body He endured the malice and murder of wicked men against a Holy God. In His soul He was smitten by the law of justice, and in His body He was smitten by the nails of the hatred of sinners. Thus on the God-side He poured out His soul unto death, and on the man-side He poured out His precious blood unto death.⁹³

Other vague similarities include: “I must yield myself to Him... imploring to be admitted into the ever closer fellowship and conformity of His death, of the Spirit in

⁹⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.90.

⁹¹ E.g. in A. J. Gordon, *Behold He Cometh* (London: Thynne & Co. Ltd., 1934 [1896 as *Ecce Venit*]), pp.20, 24, 59; *In Christ: The Believer’s Union with his Lord* (London and Glasgow: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), ch.II, ‘Crucifixion in Christ’; Judd Montgomery, *Prayer*, pp.41, 58; Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, ET 1895 [1864]), chs 10, ‘As Your Redemption’ and 11, ‘The Crucified One’; *Absolute Surrender* (London & Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd, n.d.), pp.36, 67; *Holy in Christ* (Minneapolis, MI: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., n.d. [1887]), ch.17, ‘Holiness and Crucifixion’; *The New Life* (Minneapolis, MI: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., rev. ed. 1965 [1885]), chs 6, ‘God’s Gift of His Son’, 10, ‘A Saviour from Sin’, and 12, ‘The Forgiveness of Sins’; A. T. Pierson, *Evangelistic Work in Principle and Practice* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1892), pp.39-41; *Many Infallible Proofs* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), pp.222, 308-309; A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (London: Morgan & Scott Ltd. [sic], new ed. 1915 [1888]), pp.5, 31; *Standing on Faith* (London & Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd, n.d.), pp.99, 108, 118; R. A. Torrey, ch.XIV, ‘The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead’, in R. A. Torrey, Exec. Sec., *The Fundamentals*, vol. II (Los Angeles, CA: The Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917), pp.298-299; *How to Obtain Fulness of Power* (London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1902), ch.II, ‘The Power of the Blood of Christ’; *How to Succeed in the Christian Life* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1984 [n.d.]), pp.10-11; *What the Bible Teaches* (London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1898), bk II, ch.V, ‘The Death of Christ’; G. D. Watson, *Our Own God* (Blackburn: M.O.V.E. Press, n.d. [1904]), ch.15, ‘The Blood of Sprinkling’.

⁹² Watson, *God*, p.9.

⁹³ Watson, *God*, p.95.

which He died that death”;⁹⁴ “He was going into deeper death... down to Joseph’s tomb, down into Hades”;⁹⁵ “Jesus Christ’s soul was made a guilt-offering”.⁹⁶

The absence of reference to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ is particularly noteworthy when depictions of the crucifixion and atonement otherwise use words which Kenyon himself favoured. Thus, Simpson wrote:

When Jesus Christ hung upon the Cross of Calvary He suffered as the Substitute of every sinner who should afterward believe in Him. Hidden somewhere in His wounded side we were there, and God counts it as if it were our death and our execution. This was the day of judgment for Christ and the believer. *Every demand of justice was satisfied*, every penalty executed, every debt paid.⁹⁷

Similarly, Watson asked:

How can that blood save us? In a twofold way. It *satisfied all the claims of Divine justice*, and secures our justification. And then the vitality, the living force in that precious blood, is imparted to our hearts, washing away the sinful tempers and depravity of the soul.⁹⁸

The words, ‘every demand of justice was satisfied’ and ‘satisfied all the claims of Divine justice’ could be taken straight from Kenyon, who frequently collocated ‘satisfy’ with ‘Justice’, linked by ‘claims’, ‘demands’ or ‘requirements’.⁹⁹

Lack of reference to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ is also most noteworthy in works which, it seems, have been especially formative of Kenyon’s theology. McIntyre suggests that Kenyon’s teaching on a Christian’s identification with Christ may well have been inspired by Gordon’s work, *In Christ*.¹⁰⁰ Again, one does not read in this book that Jesus ‘died spiritually’. The nearest similarity to Kenyon’s distinctive terms is “justice has executed his death-warrant, and is satisfied.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Murray, *Abide*, p.89.

⁹⁵ Simpson, *Faith*, p.101; cf. references in Mabie’s work to ‘deeper death’ (*Death*, p.26).

⁹⁶ Torrey, *Bible*, p.147. Italics removed.

⁹⁷ Simpson, *Faith*, p.108. Italics added.

⁹⁸ Watson, *God*, p.97. Italics added.

⁹⁹ E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.57, 145; *What Happened*, pp.47, 60, 69, 79, 89, 99; *Father*, pp.101, 116, 117, 129, 137, 138, 139; *Wonderful Name*, pp.6, 8; *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.108; *Jesus the Healer*, pp.14, 28, 81, 82; *Presence*, pp.54, 205. A caution must be offered: such phrasing appears in a wide range of contexts and eras, so the coincidence of terminology does not necessarily indicate direct dependence or close association. In Britain, early in the twentieth century, Hastings Rashdall wrote, “satisfy the claims of justice” (*The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology* [London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1919], p.307), and later in the century Kelly wrote, “satisfy the claims of divine justice” (*Early Christian Doctrines*, p.389).

¹⁰⁰ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.80.

¹⁰¹ Gordon, *In Christ*, p.43.

In conclusion, no evidence has been found that this wider selection of Higher Life and Faith Cure teachers referred to a ‘spiritual death’ of Jesus. The only linguistic distinctives shared by them and Kenyon related to the satisfaction of divine justice. Mabie’s language concerning Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ was thus not adopted widely among those teachers beside whom he spoke at Northfield. It is possible that Kenyon heard Mabie talk of such a death, but if so, this was a respect in which Mabie stood out rather than conformed to wider language use at the time.¹⁰² The previous section (§3.2) concluded that the Bible does not directly or consistently state that Christ ‘died spiritually’. If it even approaches doing so, then it does so only through one isolated text that is not reflective of the whole (1 Peter 3:18). In effect, this subsection has reached a similar conclusion. The overall testimony of the ‘orthodox’ circles among which Kenyon ministered was not that Jesus ‘died spiritually’. Mabie stands as an isolated ‘proof text’.

3.3.4 Conclusion to section 3.3

Various claims have been made concerning JDS teaching’s overall origins. While JDS teachers themselves see it as biblical, McConnell believes that Kenyon derived his distinctive view of Christ’s death from New Thought and Christian Science. Examination of representative writing on the subject that might have reached Kenyon cannot sustain McConnell’s claim. In response and contrast to McConnell, McIntyre claims that Kenyon drew his developing ideas from Higher Life and Faith Cure. Here the ground is very slightly firmer. Kenyon may possibly have inherited at least his terminology from a source such as Henry Mabie. However, if he did, he clearly invested meanings in the term which were not evident in Mabie’s usage. It is therefore possible that to some extent Kenyon’s thinking on the subject was original.

3.4 JDS teaching’s terminology in modern Christian theology

The search for material even vaguely resembling JDS teaching now moves to the second half of the twentieth century. JDS teaching as such is absent in the wider Christian world. Clearly, if it was widespread, then the debate about JDS teaching

¹⁰² Whether those in Higher Life and Faith Cure joined Mabie in believing that the crucified Christ was separated from God, even if they did not use the same language to describe this, will be considered in §4.2.5.

reported in §§1.5-1.8 would never have occurred or would have taken a remarkably different form. However, references to a ‘spiritual death’, or a spiritual aspect to the death, of Jesus are not impossible to find, including among well-known teachers, evangelical and otherwise. Use of the phrase by retired evangelist Billy Graham was briefly mentioned in §1.1. A longer quotation clarifies his view:

But the physical suffering of Jesus Christ was not the real suffering. Many men before Him had died. Many men had become martyrs. The awful suffering of Jesus Christ was His spiritual death. He reached the final issue of sin, fathomed the deepest sorrow, when God turned His back and hid His face so that He cried, “My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?”¹⁰³

Although McIntyre and Bitgood cite Graham in their defences of JDS teaching,¹⁰⁴ neither is claiming that Graham has been influenced by or has influenced the Word-faith movement, where JDS teaching has its home.¹⁰⁵ Their implication is merely that JDS teaching is not to be dismissed as ‘heterodox’ if ‘orthodox’ stalwarts like Billy Graham use the same language. The coincidence in language, however, must not mask the fact that Graham, like Mabie and MacLaren before him (§3.3.2) only refers to separation from God by his use of ‘spiritual death’. There is no exposition here of Kenyon’s other two concepts of partaking of Satan’s nature and becoming Satan’s prey. Furthermore, Graham is at other times content to portray the crucifixion repeatedly without any reference to JDS.¹⁰⁶

Another famous evangelical name writing, at least obliquely, of Christ’s spiritual death is J. I. Packer (1926-), a professor of theology at Regent College, Vancouver. He links Christ’s death, by way of substitution, with humanity’s. The latter death is “spiritual as well as physical, the loss of the life of God as well as that of the body.” The former is “all the dimensions of the death that was our sentence.”¹⁰⁷ Clearly, it too is a ‘spiritual as well as physical’ death. Like Graham, Packer understands this in

¹⁰³ Graham, *Peace With God*, p.83.

¹⁰⁴ McIntyre, *Kenyon*, p.183; Bitgood, *Mystery*, p.19.

¹⁰⁵ Nor do Graham’s biographers. See John Pollock, *Billy Graham* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966); J. E. Barnhart, *The Billy Graham Religion* (London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1972); Marshall Frady, *Billy Graham* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979); cf. Billy Graham, *Just As I Am* (London: HarperCollins, 1997). The closest connection is perhaps the person of Oral Roberts, “my longtime friend” (Graham, *Just As I Am*, p.563).

¹⁰⁶ Billy Graham, *Answers to Life’s Problems* (Minneapolis, MN: Grason, 1960), chs 12, ‘I Feel So Guilty’, 18, ‘Is There Life After Death?’

¹⁰⁷ J. I. Packer, *Celebrating the Saving Work of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), p.109.

terms of separation from God.¹⁰⁸ Other examples among evangelicalism can be found,¹⁰⁹ including among biblical commentators.¹¹⁰

At a greater theological distance, Roman Catholic Hans von Balthasar (1905-1988) used both the terms ‘second death’ and ‘spiritual death’ of Christ’s suffering.¹¹¹ He too wrote of Christ’s abandonment by the Father.¹¹² Similarly, at a greater linguistic distance, McIntyre’s list, referred to earlier (§3.3.2), of terms such as ‘eternal death’, ‘soul-death’, ‘spiritual agony’ and ‘essential death’ from the pens of Calvin, Spurgeon, Dale and Campbell Morgan can be extended to mid- and late-twentieth century sources: ‘eternal death’,¹¹³ ‘absolute death’,¹¹⁴ and ‘final agonies of soul and body’.¹¹⁵ Examples such as Karl Barth (1886-1968), Jürgen Moltmann (1926-) and Alan Lewis (1944-1994) do not depart markedly from their earlier counterparts in the meaning they invest in such terms: they refer to some sort of separation from or in God occurring in Christ’s death (see §§4.4.1; 4.5; 4.6.2). There is, however, a distinct difference between earlier sources and these more recent authors: the latter are anthropological monists. Balthasar’s monism in particular is explicit in his refusal to see any ultimate distinction between physical and spiritual death (this is true despite

¹⁰⁸ Packer, *Celebrating the Saving Work*, p.121.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Gotquestions.org, a “conservative, evangelical, fundamental, and non-denominational” web-based information service (Homepage, www.gotquestions.org.html, accessed 3.12.04), which is negative about the Word-faith movement, at least with respect to prosperity and positive confession (N.a., ‘What Does the Bible Say About the Prosperity Gospel?’ [n.d., accessed 3.12.04 from www.gotquestions.org/prosperity.htm]). It states:

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He experienced a spiritual death. After three hours of supernatural darkness, He cries, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Mark 15:33-34). This spiritual separation from the Father was the result of the Son’s taking our sins upon Himself.

(N.a., ‘What Is Spiritual Death?’ [n.d., accessed 3.12.04 from www.gotquestions.org/spiritual-death.html], emphasis removed). Again, it is clear that the term is used to convey only the sense of Christ’s separation from the Father.

¹¹⁰ E.g. Wuest, *First Peter*, pp.95-96. As with earlier examples, Wuest links the term with the ‘cry of dereliction’ and regards it as an abandonment or desertion of Christ by God (specifically, in his case, “the two other members of the Triune God” [p.96]).

¹¹¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* ET Aidan Nichols (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990 [1970]), pp.50, 52; *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* VII ET Brian McNeil (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989 [1969]), p.230.

¹¹² Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.ix, 79, 81.

¹¹³ Barth, *CD* IV/1, p.247.

¹¹⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* ET of 2nd edn R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974 [1973]), p.246; Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* Vol. 7 ET David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971 [1966]), p.139.

¹¹⁵ Alan E. Lewis, *Between Cross & Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p.122.

the fact that he offers certain exegetical observations as immediate reasons for his refusal).¹¹⁶ In this monistic presentation, the death of Christ is, simply, total. ‘Absolute death’ becomes an especially apposite term. The implications of anthropological monism for understanding and expressing Christ’s death are explored further in §3.6.2.

In conclusion to this section, language approximating to that found in JDS teaching is occasionally found outside it. When this is the case, the meaning generally attached to it is that Christ was separated from God. This concept will be explored in chapter 4. Another noteworthy observation is that any meaning intended by the phrase ‘Jesus died spiritually’ is clearly affected by the anthropology of the person making the statement. The anthropology of JDS teachers themselves forms the focus of the next section.

3.5 The necessity of Christ’s ‘spiritual death’

It was stated in §1.4.2 that JDS teachers believe that ‘I am a spirit, I have a soul, and I live in a body’. This distinctive pneumocentric trichotomy interacts with JDS teaching in that its promotion of the spiritual over the material (and ‘soulish’) leads to the unsurprising conclusion that the most important aspect of Christ’s death was its spiritual aspect, and that if Jesus had only died physically, atonement for lost humanity would not have been achieved. Thus this stark promotion needs to be examined. As a preliminary step, the underlying distinctions between aspects of humanity that JDS teachers identify must be studied, for it is only valid to promote one aspect over another if in fact they are distinguishable in the first place. First, JDS teaching about the necessity of Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ and its underlying anthropology will be presented (§3.5.1). Thereafter, §3.5.2 considers distinctions between the immaterial and material, §3.5.3 discusses the promotion of the immaterial over the material, §3.5.4 studies distinctions between spirit and soul, and §3.5.5 ponders the promotion of the spirit over the soul.

¹¹⁶ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.155, 157.

3.5.1 A basis for the necessity of Christ's 'spiritual death'

One of the most infamous aspects of JDS teaching is its demotion of the physical death of Christ.¹¹⁷ The three authors under review are unanimous: “[W]e hold that the physical death of Jesus did not touch the sin issue at all. It was only a means to an end, and the real suffering of Jesus, the Substitute, must be spiritual as well as physical.” Christ’s “[p]hysical death would not remove our sins. He tasted death for every man – spiritual death.” “When His blood poured out it did not atone.”¹¹⁸ From the first two of these quotations it is not only clear that Christ’s physical death was insufficient, but that it was the spiritual death which was pivotal. Effectively, Christ *had to* die spiritually. The causes of this necessity are twofold. The more direct cause is to do with substitution. Adam suffered ‘spiritual death’ as a result of his sin, requiring Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ as a satisfactory substitute. However, the underlying cause is that the problems of sin and sickness with which Christ’s death dealt are *essentially* spiritual rather than physical matters,¹¹⁹ and are so because humanity is essentially spiritual in its makeup. There is a noteworthy irony here: JDS teaching emphasises spiritual *method* in the atonement; conversely, its accompanying wider teaching emphasises physical *results* – bodily health and material wealth.

The anthropology is in turn part of a similar cosmology. In his repeated affirmations that the spiritual is more important than the material Kenyon went so far as to envisage a world controlled by God-given *spiritual* forces and laws, that took precedence over for instance physical ones.¹²⁰ As commentators have noted,¹²¹ Hagin and Copeland teach likewise.¹²²

¹¹⁷ A full examination of JDS teaching’s views concerning the *physical* death of Christ lies beyond the limits of this thesis, although a brief survey was offered in §§1.4.5-1.4.7.

¹¹⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.118; Hagin, *Name*, p.29; Copeland, correspondence with McConnell, quoted in McConnell, *Promise*, p.120, italics removed.

¹¹⁹ Kenyon, *Happened*, p.59; *Healer*, p.27; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.6.

¹²⁰ Kenyon, *Knowledge*, p.32; *Bible*, p.15.

¹²¹ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.106; Perriman, *Faith*, p.33.

¹²² Hagin, *In Him*, part I; Kenneth Copeland, ‘Don’t Hang the Curtains... Hang the Rod!’, pp.2-5, *Believer’s Voice Of Victory* 33.6 (June 2005), p.3; *Force of Righteousness*, p.11.

Kenyon held to a rigidly trichotomous view in which human nature comprises spirit, soul or mind, and body.¹²³ This trichotomous formulation involved such dualistic disjunction between the parts that he insisted that of these three the spirit alone was the true ‘I’ to the exclusion of the others.¹²⁴ Hagin’s anthropology was essentially the same. While, rarely, he could write in dichotomous terms,¹²⁵ his generally pervasive trichotomy consistently followed Kenyon in subjugating the body to the soul, and that in turn to the spirit, leading to the well known formula: “Man *is* a spirit, *has* a soul, and *lives* in a body.”¹²⁶ Copeland also offers a clearly pneumocentric trichotomy.¹²⁷ This characterisation of humanity has moral repercussions. For Kenyon, Adam’s sin caused demotion of the spirit ‘below’ the mind in human affairs, while for Hagin and Copeland obedience to God requires a state in which spirit dominates soul and, in turn, body in making moral decisions, while in contrast immorality results when body or soul dominates.¹²⁸

The reasoning for this position commences with the biblical statement that humans are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:26). Since God is spirit (John 4:24), then humans must essentially be spirit as well.¹²⁹ JDS anthropology is further supported by references to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12. Kenyon and Hagin clearly regarded 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as self-explanatory, both using it as a proof text for their trichotomy without elaboration.¹³⁰ Copeland makes somewhat more considered use of the verse. For him, the word order (spirit, soul, body) supports the prioritisation of the spirit.¹³¹ In similar vein, Copeland refers to Hebrews 4:12 in his explication of his trichotomous view, with no further comment beyond the observation that “only the Word can put the spirit, soul and body of a man in proper order.”¹³² The third way in which these authors’ trichotomy is supported involves

¹²³ Little effort is made to define these terms in JDS teaching, though Hagin did characterise the soul as “the intellect, sensibilities, and will” (*Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.56).

¹²⁴ Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.17-18.

¹²⁵ Hagin, *Real Faith*, p.13.

¹²⁶ Hagin, *Human Spirit*, p.8; *Man on Three Dimensions*, p.7; *Redeemed*, p.56; similarly *Real Faith*, p.14; *Zoe*, p.3.

¹²⁷ Copeland, *Force of Faith*, pp.6, 8; ‘To Know’, p.6.

¹²⁸ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.25; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.7; Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.6.

¹²⁹ Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.17-18; *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.46; cf. *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.32.

¹³⁰ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.17; Hagin, *New Birth*, pp.6-7.

¹³¹ Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.6.

¹³² Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.7.

Kenyon and Copeland both justifying the claim that one's spirit should rule one's mind and body with reference to the writings of the apostle Paul, in which the latter famously contrasts 'the spirit' with 'the flesh', portraying spirit and flesh as at war (e.g. Romans 8:4-7; Galatians 5:16-17).¹³³

This anthropology has met with firm resistance. Its critics have claimed that it has more in common with Platonism,¹³⁴ Gnosticism,¹³⁵ or New Thought¹³⁶ than it does with biblical Christianity. Several issues intertwine, and require individual analysis. Both the distinctions between and the evaluations of spirit, soul and body will be studied in the ensuing sections.

3.5.2 Distinctions between the immaterial and material

Clearly, JDS teachers distinguish sharply between immaterial and material aspects of human being. This is a necessary step for them to promote one over the other. Whether it reflects biblical teaching has already emerged (§3.2.5): the Bible does not offer a consistent anthropological position, certainly not a consistently dualistic one. JDS teaching's appeal to God's image and John 4:24 does not suffice.¹³⁷ The logic applied by the authors under study could equally be applied the other way round: since humanity is made in God's image, and humanity is self-evidently physical in nature, then this must imply some physicality in God's being.¹³⁸ John 4:24 would not of itself preclude this possibility: the statement that God is spirit might in context be best understood functionally rather than ontologically.¹³⁹ Of course, and more

¹³³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.156; Copeland, *Force of Faith*, pp.6-7.

¹³⁴ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.103.

¹³⁵ Matta, *Jesus*, throughout; McConnell, *Promise*, p.110.

¹³⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.105-109.

¹³⁷ Difficulties with dualistic thinking about the divine image have been traced by Gunton from Irenaeus to Descartes. Gunton concluded that, because in these traditional formulations the image was classically seen in terms of reason, and the likeness of soul rather than body to God, "one implication is that our embodiedness cannot be the place where the image, and hence our true humanity, is found" (Colin E. Gunton, 'Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*', pp.47-61 in Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton, *Persons, Divine and Human* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991], p.49).

¹³⁸ David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: Collins, rev. ed. 1973 [1953]) pp.30-31, considers the idea, with reference to the Gilgamesh epic and the work of von Rad, that Genesis 1:26 might imply some physicality in God. He does not rule out the possibility. Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The True Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) p.12, on the other hand, wisely does.

¹³⁹ So George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (Milton Keynes: Word [UK], 1991 [1987]), p.62; contrast Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John, Revised* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p.240.

importantly, the concept of ‘image’ need not preclude ontological differences between divine spirituality and human nature.

Given that JDS teaching does not derive its dualism from the clear testimony of scripture, Kenyon may have learned it from either New Thought and Christian Science, or Higher Life and Faith Cure. There is no doubt that all these groups distinguished clearly between the immaterial (spirit, soul, or mind) and matter. Within New Thought, however, matter was sometimes regarded as illusory.¹⁴⁰ Mary Baker Eddy went so far as to deny matter and was thus essentially monistic: “[M]y system of metaphysics... rests on God as One and All, and denies the actual existence of both matter and evil.”¹⁴¹

Higher Life and Faith Cure, on the other hand, were dualistic, thereby mirroring the traditional position of Christianity and its reading of scripture (§3.2.5). Thus JDS teaching does not depart from historic Christianity in this respect. Indeed, a significant number of commentators continue to advocate forms of dualism, though often moderate or even ‘monistic’ ones. Examples can be found among biblical scholars,¹⁴² theologians,¹⁴³ philosophers¹⁴⁴ and psychologists.¹⁴⁵ However, this dualism has been strongly criticised in recent decades, being replaced by monistic anthropologies that have enjoyed widespread support among not only biblical scholars,¹⁴⁶ but also theologians,¹⁴⁷ philosophers¹⁴⁸ and psychologists.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁰ Geldard, *Teachings*, pp.118-119.

¹⁴¹ Eddy, *No and Yes*, p.29. Eddy’s denial of the existence of matter, however, seems to be contradicted by her belief in *physical* healing (e.g. *Science*, p.14).

¹⁴² George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (London: SCM, 1992).

¹⁴³ A. A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1986); Cooper, *Body*.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen T. Davis, *Risen Indeed* (London: SPCK, 1993).

¹⁴⁵ Jeffrey H. Boyd, ‘A History of the Concept of the Soul during the 20th Century’, *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26.1 (1998), pp.66-82.

¹⁴⁶ See brief discussion in §3.2.5.

¹⁴⁷ E.g. George Carey, *I Believe in Man* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977); Clarke H. Pinnock, ‘Foreword’, p.13 in Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1997).

¹⁴⁸ E.g. Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism & Fundamentalism* (Valley Forge, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1996), ch. 6.

¹⁴⁹ Evident, e.g., in John Radford and Ernest Govier, *A Textbook of Psychology* (London: Sheldon Press, 1980), ch.6, ‘Physiological Studies’; Michael Gelder *et al*, *Oxford Textbook of Psychiatry* (3rd edn Oxford: OUP, 1996 [1983]), ch.4, ‘Aetiology’.

Given the uncertainty of the biblical picture, the complexities of the theological, philosophical and psychological arguments, and the disparity of views among current authorities, this project will admit agnosticism on the matter. For the sake of present discussion, it will be accepted that an anthropological dualism that distinguishes between spirit/soul on one hand and body on the other has been widely held within historic Christianity, maintains many supporters today, and has a number of arguments in its favour. Therefore, JDS teaching's promotion of the immaterial over the material, which builds on its distinction between the two, deserves discussion in its own right. This matter will now be considered.

3.5.3 The promotion of the immaterial over the material

As stated earlier, Kenyon and Copeland justify the claim that one's spirit should rule one's body with reference to the Pauline contrast between 'spirit' and 'flesh' (e.g. Romans 8:4-7; Galatians 5:16-17). This is a naïve reading of Paul. Occasionally, he used 'flesh' in ways that denoted or at least connoted the physical (e.g. Romans 2:28; 2 Corinthians 4:11; 7:5; Colossians 2:1). However, this denotation was not true of those passages where Paul contrasted flesh with spirit. Although there is disagreement about whether the distinction Paul drew was primarily ethical¹⁵⁰ or eschatological,¹⁵¹ and sometimes about whether Paul's references to spirit were to the human or the divine,¹⁵² there is certainty that Paul did *not* refer in these contexts to physiological flesh.¹⁵³ That this is the case can be seen, simply, from the fact that sins listed as 'fleshly' included those that self-evidently do not arise from physical urges, desires or temptations (1 Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:19-21). Rather, Paul referred to the moral frailty and even failure that is characteristic of this age.

If biblical justification is sought for the promotion of the immaterial over the material, beyond Paul's spirit/flesh contrast and banal observations such as the word order in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, appeal might be made to Paul's sense of necessity, for

¹⁵⁰ So Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.234-241, 332-335; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8* (WBC. Milton Keynes: Word [UK], 1991 [1988]); *Theology*, pp.62-66.

¹⁵¹ So Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), pp.816-822; Walter B. Russell, *The Flesh/Spirit Conflict in Galatians* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1997), p.2.

¹⁵² Fee equivocates, using the deliberately ambivalent term 'S/spirit' (*Presence*, p.25).

¹⁵³ Bultmann, *Theology*, p.238

instance, that “*I remain in the body*” (Phil.1:24). This statement might suggest the belief that the real ‘I’ is an entity other than the body, and the body its home. However, Paul can also refer to an ‘I’ that he distinguishes from his mind or spirit (e.g. 1 Cor.14:14,15). Scholars agree that for Paul full personal existence involves bodily existence.¹⁵⁴ Insofar as the soul can be distinguished from the body at all, its disembodied existence is ‘naked’, and this existence is something to be avoided (2 Corinthians 5:2-4). There seems to be no biblical reason to site the ‘I’ in one ‘part’ of the human make-up rather than the whole, or to argue that one ‘part’ controls, or ought to control, the other(s). Therefore, a Christian anthropological dualism need not postulate that the ‘real person’ is immaterial; still less that it should control the material. The whole person can be seen, with Barth, as ‘bodily soul’ or ‘besouled body’.¹⁵⁵ On this basis, JDS teaching’s prioritisation of the spirit as the true self is less than satisfactory.

Accepting that the Bible does not offer a sound basis for prioritising the immaterial over the material in human nature, it is necessary to concede that until the twentieth century, Christian writers not only distinguished between body and soul but frequently promoted the latter over the former. For example, Augustine, working within a Platonist framework, overtly prioritised the soul over the body. This is evident throughout his treatise on the origin of the soul, where it is clear that the soul dominates the body, which is its home.¹⁵⁶ It is also evident from his treatise on the Trinity that the mind, to the exclusion of the body, is the true self.¹⁵⁷ Augustine did, however, reject “utterly” “the theory which affirms that each soul is thrust into the body as into a prison.”¹⁵⁸

Luther also relegated the body: “the spirit may live without the body, but the body has no life apart from the spirit.” Furthermore, the work of the body “is only to carry

¹⁵⁴ They include those who see Paul as mainly monist (e.g. Robinson, *Body*, Bultmann, *Theology*) and those who give greater credence to the dualistic elements in his writing (e.g. Cooper, *Body*).

¹⁵⁵ Barth, *CD III/2*, p.350. It is not necessary thereby to agree with Barth’s monism: “soul would not be soul, if it were not bodily.”

¹⁵⁶ Augustine, *On the Soul and its Origin* (NPNF I/V) e.g. IV.4: the soul “moves the body” (p.355).

¹⁵⁷ Augustine, *On the Trinity* XI.1 (NPNF I/III, p.144).

¹⁵⁸ Augustine, *Letter CLXIV* (NPNF I/I, p.521).

out and apply that which the soul knows and the spirit believes.”¹⁵⁹ Calvin perhaps most overtly prioritised the soul/spirit over the body, in words even reminiscent of Plato and Nag Hammadi:

Moreover, there can be no question that man consists of a body and a soul; meaning by soul, an immortal though created essence, which is his *nobler part*. Sometimes he is called a spirit... Christ, in commending his spirit to the Father, and Stephen his to Christ, simply mean, that when the *soul is freed from the prison-house of the body*, God becomes its perpetual keeper.

* * * * *

[Biblical] passages which everywhere occur, not only clearly distinguish the soul from the body, but by giving it the name of man, intimate that it is his *principal part*.¹⁶⁰

Among the Higher Life and Faith Cure authors who might have influenced Kenyon most directly, A. J. Gordon’s dualism seemed particularly moderate. He did not believe that the soul was the real or whole person, but humanity’s “complete condition” required “body and soul united”.¹⁶¹ A. T. Pierson could appear to prioritise the spiritual. In calling his hearers to view modern missionary activities as in some way paralleling the initial missionary expansion depicted in the Acts of the Apostles, he wrote: “Only a spiritual eye can read them: only a spiritual mind interpret them.” However, it is clear from the context that Pierson simply meant by these terms the eye and the mind guided by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶² In similar vein, the following words by G. D. Watson seem initially to foreshadow Kenyon’s favouring of ‘revelation knowledge’ over ‘sense knowledge’: “There are two hemispheres of knowledge; first, the hemisphere of what we learn through our senses; secondly, the hemisphere of knowledge revealed intuitively by the Spirit.” However, Watson was actually valuing sensory knowledge as well as intuitive knowledge, with respect to 2 Peter 1:16-19.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Luther, *Magnificat*, LW 21, pp.303-304.

¹⁶⁰ Calvin, *Institutes* I/XV, 2, pp.160-161, italics added; cf. Plato, *The Republic* X:611 ET John Davies and David Vaughan (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1941), pp.357-358; ‘Nag Hammadi’, *The Treatise on the Resurrection* 45:40-46:2; 46:22-47:24; 47:37-48:3; *A Valentinian Exposition* 35:28-37; *On Baptism* B throughout (Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library* pp.55-56, 486, 488). Calvin’s reliance on Platonism is noted by Hughes, *Image*, p.399.

¹⁶¹ Gordon, *Behold He Cometh*, p.202.

¹⁶² A. T. Pierson, *The New Acts of the Apostles* (London: James Nisbet & Co., Limited, 1901), p.10.

¹⁶³ G. D. Watson, *Coals of Fire: Being Expositions of Scripture on the Doctrine, Experience, and Practice of Christian Holiness* (n.pl.: n.pub., 1886), pp.119-120, quoting p.120.

Andrew Murray did more clearly promote the immaterial over the material: he regarded the soul as the true self, and wrote, “the spirit, as linking him [the soul] with the Divine, was the highest [part]; the body, connecting him with the sensible and the animal, the lowest”.¹⁶⁴ He could thus write, in ways quite similar to Kenyon’s, “Sin entered in, and appeared to thwart the Divine plan: the material obtained a fearful supremacy over the spiritual.”¹⁶⁵ Sin altered what had previously been a perfect harmony between spirit and matter: “Man was to be the highest specimen of Divine art: the combination in one being, of matter and spirit in perfect harmony, as type of the most perfect union between God and His own creation.”¹⁶⁶ A. B. Simpson’s writing also contained a prioritisation of the immaterial over the material: “the soul is superior to the body,”¹⁶⁷ and physical healing must be sought through “spiritual channels.”¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Simpson held a holistic view of humanity’s spirituality and physicality: “Man has a twofold nature. He is both a material and spiritual being.”¹⁶⁹ In summary, Higher Life and Faith Cure offered various forms of dualism, some more moderate and balanced than others. The seeds of Kenyon’s ideas may have lain in the teaching of those, like Andrew Murray and A. B. Simpson, who most explicitly promoted the immaterial. Given that there is ample precedent for JDS teaching’s promotion of the spirit over the body in historic Christianity, including among Kenyon’s own circle, there is no pressing need to appeal to New Thought in considering JDS teaching’s sources at this point. However, comparison is still worthwhile, to see if there is a contrast between the two streams of teaching on this subject.

Quimby wrote of soul and matter in typically esoteric and puzzling terms:

Everyone will admit that all the qualities of ‘soul’ which I have mentioned will apply to man’s intelligence, and that ‘mind’ according to every definition can change; also admit that Wisdom cannot change, that it is the same today and forever. Now can anyone tell me what there is that is not matter that can be changed? ... what is it that is not Wisdom, God, or spirit, and not matter and yet can be changed? It is matter held in solution called mind, which the power of

¹⁶⁴ Andrew Murray *The Spirit of Christ* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1888), p.333.

¹⁶⁵ Murray, *Abide in Christ*, p.83.

¹⁶⁶ Murray, *Abide in Christ*, p.83.

¹⁶⁷ A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit or Power from On High Volume I* (New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1895), p.42.

¹⁶⁸ Simpson, *Gospel of Healing*, p.28.

¹⁶⁹ Simpson, *Gospel of Healing*, p.5.

Wisdom can condense into a solid so dense as to become the substance called 'matter'. Assume this theory and then you can see how man can become sick and get well by a change of mind.¹⁷⁰

While, according to this ontology, soul, or mind, seems to be derivative of matter, being matter 'held in solution', nevertheless mind, by the operation of 'Wisdom', dictates the behaviour of matter, such as the sickness or health of a human body.

Emerson, similarly, building on the works of Plato and Platonists,¹⁷¹ taught that, in Geldard's words, "the mind had to rule the body."¹⁷² He also drew on Hindu ideas to teach that sensory perception of matter could be an illusion trapping an individual in a state of less than full actualisation.¹⁷³ Eddy's view was yet more negative about matter:

I learned these truths in divine Science: that all real being is in God, the divine Mind, and that Life, Truth, and Love are all-powerful and ever-present; that the opposite of Truth, - called error, sin, sickness, disease, death, - is the false testimony of false material sense, of mind in matter; that this false sense evolves, in belief, a subjective state of mortal mind which this same so-called mind names *matter*, thereby shutting out the true sense of Spirit. My discovery, that erring, mortal, misnamed *mind* produces all the organism and action of the mortal body, set my thoughts to work in new channels, and led up to my demonstration of the proposition that Mind is All and matter is naught as the leading factor in Mind-science. Christian Science reveals incontrovertibly that Mind is All-in-all, that the only realities are the divine Mind and idea.¹⁷⁴

Trine, though using the three-fold terminology of soul, mind and body, rather than spirit, soul and body, wrote material to which Kenyon's ideas came closest. He advised his readers to realise their oneness with the Infinite Life and Power in quiet receptivity:

Calmly, quietly, and expectantly desire that this realization break in upon and take possession of your soul. As it breaks in upon and takes possession of the soul, it will manifest itself to your mind, and from this you will feel its manifestations in every part of your body.¹⁷⁵

It is clear from these brief quotations that Kenyon's prioritisation of spirit and soul over body did not reflect the extreme anti-materialism of Eddy. The positions of Quimby, Emerson and Trine, however mysteriously expressed, have more in common with Kenyon, all indicating that soul, or mind, is the originating force that

¹⁷⁰ P. P. Quimby, 'The World of the Senses', 1860-1865, ch.15 in Dresser, *Quimby Manuscripts*.

¹⁷¹ Geldard, *Teachings*, pp.22-27.

¹⁷² Geldard, *Teachings*, p.24. Emerson used the word 'soul' pantheistically (Emerson, 'Address').

¹⁷³ Geldard, *Teachings*, pp.118-119.

¹⁷⁴ Eddy, *Science*, pp.108-109, italics original, paragraph breaks removed.

¹⁷⁵ Trine, *Infinite*, p.192.

affects physical outcomes in the body. That stated, the observations, already indicated, that similar prioritisation of the soul is to be found scattered throughout traditional Christianity and that the nearest terminological similarity is in Simpson's work, suggest that JDS teaching's promotion of the spiritual over the material owes its form to traditional Christian anthropologies.

3.5.4 Distinctions between spirit and soul

As stated earlier, JDS teachers refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 to support their trichotomous distinction between spirit and soul or, as Kenyon often expressed, between spirit and mind or intellect. However, they have many modern commentators on 1 Thessalonians against them,¹⁷⁶ and rightly so. Paul's clear emphasis is on God's preservation of the whole person, as indicated by ὁλοτελεῖς and ὁλόκληρον, and he 'piles up' words to express this emphasis. There is no more need to see trichotomy here than to see tetrachotomy in the 'greatest command' as recorded at Mark 12:30.¹⁷⁷ Hebrews 4:12, similarly, can no more be used to argue that spirit and soul are separate parts of a three-fold structure than to argue that joints and marrow are. The emphasis of the verse is clearly on the penetration of God's word to the deepest recesses of the person.¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, trichotomous formulations have a long history in Christianity. Hoekema traces the existence of trichotomy from Irenaeus in the second century to

¹⁷⁶ E.g. Ernest Best, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* BNTC (London: A & C Black, 1972); Dunn, *Theology*, p.57; Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), p.269; Hoekema, *Image*, p.208; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. ed. 1991 [1959]), p.182; Robinson, *Body*, p.27; Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), p.218; Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p.207. I. Howard Marshall, in contrast, believes the triadic wording is "a description of human nature as consisting of three parts." However, the "distinctions are loose, and do not suggest three 'parts' of man which can be sharply separated, but rather three aspects of his being" (*1 and 2 Thessalonians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] pp.162-163). Similarly, E. Schweizer believes that 1 Thessalonians 5:23 refers to a tripartite constituency, but regards the wording as traditional or liturgical, not Pauline (πνεῦμα, *TDNT* VI, p.435 and n.685). Calvin saw a tripartite constitution here, in which 'spirit' is "reason or intelligence" and 'soul' is "the will and all the affections" (*Commentary on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians* ET William Pringle [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979 (1550)], vol.XXI, p.304).

¹⁷⁷ Morris, *Epistles*, p.182; Hoekema, *Image*, pp.208-209.

¹⁷⁸ "It would indeed be precarious to draw any conclusions from these words about our author's psychology." (F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. ed. 1990 (1963)], p.113; cf. Hoekema, *Image*, p.208; Sherlock, *Doctrine*, p.218).

Watchman Nee, for instance, in the twentieth.¹⁷⁹ This is despite the fact that trichotomists are, in the eyes of mediaeval Christianity, in error, for trichotomism was condemned at the fourth Council of Constantinople (869-870). Conceiving of differences between spirit and soul is not as easy as doing so with respect to soul and body. Theologians have tackled the difficulty, and the relevant biblical material, in a number of ways, not all of them trichotomous.

One way, beloved of anthropological monists, is to understand all biblical references to spirit to refer to divine spirit, so that ‘spirit’ does not denote a constituent aspect of human nature.¹⁸⁰ However, this narrowly theological understanding of spirit had already been cast into doubt by H. Wheeler Robinson.¹⁸¹ Niebuhr was thus right to demur: Paul could speak of the human spirit.¹⁸² While, occasionally, Niebuhr used ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ in apparently interchangeable ways,¹⁸³ he was encouraged by the biblical data to make a conceptual distinction between the two: soul is “the life principle in man”, while spirit is “man’s organ of relation to God.”¹⁸⁴ This coheres with what he regarded as Christianity’s definition of spirit: it is suprarational, and is associated with freedom, transcendence, and the search for the ultimate “ground of existence.”¹⁸⁵

Niebuhr’s understanding of the biblical term is, however, questionable. Others are adamant that spirit and soul are used interchangeably throughout scripture,¹⁸⁶ and it is certainly difficult to see how Niebuhr’s assertion that the spirit rather than the soul is the ‘organ of relation’ to God fits with such scriptural proclamations as “my soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God” (Luke 1:46-47). Similarly, “I will

¹⁷⁹ Hoekema, *Image*, p.205.

¹⁸⁰ E.g. Barth, *CD* III.2, p.354; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp.519, 522, 529-530.

¹⁸¹ *The Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), p.110.

¹⁸² Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* Vol.I (London: Nisbet & Co., 1941), p.163 and n.1; cf. Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.205-208; Dunn, *Theology*, pp.76-77.

¹⁸³ Niebuhr, *Nature*, p.13.

¹⁸⁴ Niebuhr, *Nature*, p.162; cf. p.163. According to Niebuhr, biblical distinctions between spirit and soul are not sharp (p.163). More recently, Dunn, writing about Pauline anthropology, has reached a similar conclusion. While for him the Pauline soul is “the whole person” (*Theology*, p.76), he writes that the spirit in Paul is “evidently that dimension of the human person by means of which the person relates most directly to God” (p.77; cf. p.78).

¹⁸⁵ Niebuhr, *Nature*, pp.14-15, quoting p.15.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. Hoekema, *Image*, pp.206-207.

pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind” (1 Corinthians 14:15) does not suggest that the spirit is an ‘organ’ that relates any more obviously to God than does the mind. Those who follow Niebuhr in positing any distinction between spirit and soul must either create their own definitions to suit, or must be highly tentative in the undertaking.¹⁸⁷ Nothing is lost to theological discussion by following the biblical lead and using the terms interchangeably. Trichotomous readings of ‘spirit’ are suspect, and the Bible certainly does not set a precedent in offering an ontological distinction between spirit and soul. This conclusion means immediately that JDS teachers’ attempts not only to distinguish between spirit and soul but also to promote the former over the latter are suspect. Furthermore, their arguments for this promotion are sparse. They will be noted below, before further consideration is given to possible sources of this idea.

3.5.5 The promotion of the spirit over the soul

Because JDS teaching makes no clear distinction between discussing how the spirit should rule over the body and how it should rule over the soul, they do not offer two separate sets of reasoning. Thus arguments already presented and evaluated pertain once more. For JDS teaching, God is spirit (John 4:24) and humans are made in God’s image. Thus they, like God, are essentially spirits, not souls. So the spirit, because it is the true self, should be uppermost in human life. The reasoning from God’s image has already been evaluated (§3.5.2). So too has the claim that the spirit rather than the soul is the organ of communication with God (§3.5.4). Furthermore, it has already been indicated that neither the word order in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 nor the wording of Hebrews 4:12 supports such claims.

Given the lack of biblical support for Kenyon’s prioritisation of spirit over soul the question arises as to the source from which he gained it. To address this question, it is necessary to divide Kenyon’s prioritisation into two aspects: the spirit is the true self; and the spirit should control the soul. With regard to the second aspect, it is likely that Kenyon heard such ideas preached in Higher Life and Faith Cure circles. Simpson, a trichotomist, held that “the soul represents the intellectual and emotional

¹⁸⁷ E.g. Sherlock, *Doctrine of Humanity*, p.220.

elements that constitute man. The spirit represents the higher and the Divine life which links us directly to God, and enables us to know and to come into relationship with Divine things.”¹⁸⁸ This belief that God communicates directly with only the human spirit led Simpson to conclude that “our higher spiritual nature should control the soul. Just as the soul is superior to the body, so the spirit should be predominant to the soul. The fatal defect of natural life is that the soul is predominant, and the natural mind controls spirit and body.”¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Jessie Penn-Lewis taught that the soul should be a ‘handmaid’ of the spirit.¹⁹⁰

With respect, on the other hand, to the first aspect (the spirit is the true self, as opposed to the soul), a source is sought in vain. There is no such statement in historic Christianity that Kenyon seemed to be echoing. Even historic trichotomism, while distinguishing between spirit and soul, did not declare that spirit was the true self, while soul was, in contrast, an appendage. Advancing the scrutiny to Kenyon’s immediate historic predecessors and possible influencers, neither Higher Life and Faith Cure¹⁹¹ nor New Thought and Christian Science¹⁹² offered a precedent. Some echoes of Gnosticism are discernible,¹⁹³ but if they reached Kenyon’s mind the route is not readily identifiable.

3.5.6 Conclusion to §3.5

In conclusion to this section, Kenyon’s, Hagin’s and Copeland’s statements concerning the necessity of Jesus’ spiritual death depend upon their anthropology that ‘I am a spirit, I have a soul, and I live in a body’. This anthropology does not

¹⁸⁸ Simpson, *Spirit*, p.36.

¹⁸⁹ Simpson, *Spirit*, p.42.

¹⁹⁰ Jessie Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit* (Leicester: Overcomer Book Room, 3rd edn, n.d.), p.8. McIntyre (Kenyon, p.116) and Lie (personal communication, 16.9.05) both consider Kenyon to have read her work favourably.

¹⁹¹ Anthropological formulations among these authors varied between dichotomous and trichotomous ones. Those which distinguished between spirit and soul did not limit selfhood to the spirit. If anything, Murray (*Spirit*, p.333) and Penn-Lewis (*Soul*, p.7) regarded the soul, not the spirit, as the self.

¹⁹² For Eddy, ‘spirit’, ‘soul’ and ‘mind’ were synonymous (*No and Yes*, pp.20, 32). Trine’s advice, already referred to, that realisation of oneness with Infinite Life should reach soul first, then mind, and then body (*Tune*, p.192) does resemble Kenyon’s spirit-soul-body prioritisation, but does not view Trine’s ‘soul’ exclusively as the true self.

¹⁹³ ‘Nag Hammadi’, *Treatise 45:40-46:1* (Robinson, *Library*, p.55); cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.21.4 (*ANF* I, p.346). According to Schweizer, some Gnostics, in contrast, relegated the spirit beneath the soul (Schweizer, ‘πνεῦμα’, *TDNT* VI, p.396).

have a strong biblical or theological basis. Its prioritisation of the immaterial over the physical cannot be justified. Furthermore, its distinction between spirit and soul, let alone its promotion of one over the other as controlling self, cannot claim support. As this anthropology has the weaknesses that this section has explored, JDS teaching cannot claim that a certain ‘spiritual’ aspect of Christ’s death is more important than others, still less that a distinctly ‘spiritual’ aspect to Christ’s death was essential to atonement while a lesser physical aspect was merely a necessary consequence of the former.

3.6 Chapter conclusions

3.6.1 Summary

This chapter has explored the overall idea that Jesus ‘died spiritually’. First, §3.2 considered the implicit claim that this death is taught in the Bible, concluding that the claim cannot be sustained. Although Genesis 2:17 and Ephesians 2:1 offer some biblical precedent for referring to fallen unregenerate humanity as ‘spiritually’ dead, Isaiah 53:9 and 1 Timothy 3:16 do not make the same assertion of Christ in his suffering. Only 1 Peter 3:18, an ambiguous text, might be claimed as a ‘proof-text’, if it is read from the point of view of anthropological dualism. Whether Peter would have intended it to have been read this way is far from clear.

§3.3 discussed Kenyon’s possible contemporary and immediately antecedent sources. No material was found in the selected New Thought and Christian Science sources that even approximated to a declaration that Jesus ‘died spiritually’. Eddy explicitly and Trine implicitly denied it. Thus McConnell’s claim that Kenyon developed his ‘spiritualisation’ of Jesus’ death from these sources is misplaced. Certainly, Kenyon might yet have found some of the ideas entailed in Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ (separation from God; participation in a sinful, satanic nature; becoming Satan’s prey) in New Thought and Christian Science. Such possibilities remain to be explored in future chapters. But the overall idea did not lie there.

McIntyre’s research into Higher Life and Faith Cure was a little more successful. Kenyon may have first heard the phrase ‘Jesus died spiritually’ in the preaching of

Henry Mabie. However, if so, Kenyon invested new meanings in the term. Furthermore, other teachers in the movements, such as A. J. Gordon and A. B. Simpson, did not teach a ‘spiritual death’, even though their descriptions of the crucifixion resembled Kenyon’s in other ways.

§3.4 noted that references to a ‘spiritual death’ of Christ are not entirely absent from modern Christian teaching outside JDS doctrine. They are found, very occasionally, in evangelical and other material. Some of these recent theologians hold to a monistic anthropology. The implications of the anthropological foundation of the statement that Christ ‘died spiritually’ will be explored in §3.6.2. In those cases where a clear meaning is attached to the idea of Christ’s ‘spiritual death’, it is that Christ was separated from or abandoned by God.

§3.5 considered the further claim of JDS teaching, that Jesus *had* to ‘die spiritually’ to bring about salvation. Discussion required an investigation of JDS doctrine’s rigidly pneumocentric trichotomism. Although an immaterial-material anthropological dualism was not discounted (though neither was it confirmed), promotion of the immaterial over the material was shown to be suspect. Kenyon may have gained his form of this promotion from either New Thought or from Higher Life, as both groups exhibited a similar tendency. A trichotomous distinction between spirit and soul could not be sustained, and so promotion of the former over the latter was shown to be invalid, as indeed JDS teaching’s reasons for this promotion had already been found wanting. Precedent, nevertheless, for Kenyon’s relegation of soul beneath spirit was detected in Higher Life and Faith Cure material. Given these critiques of JDS anthropology, the concomitant claim that Jesus had to ‘die spiritually’ for the true work of atonement to occur cannot rest on the reasons given by JDS teachers.

3.6.2 Implications

A number of implications arise from these findings. The first relates to JDS exegesis of the Bible. Given the poverty of the exegetical work evident so far, no great optimism can be maintained regarding the handling of further passages. Also, the

criticisms of JDS exegesis offered by others (see §2.4.3) are confirmed. Throughout, the sheer brevity of exegetical discussion is remarkable: authors' intentions are normally assumed, rather than demonstrated.

The second implication relates to the genesis of JDS teaching. It has been found, in the form expressed by Kenyon, neither in New Thought and Christian Science nor in Higher Life and Faith Cure. However, some of its roots are evident. First, the phrase 'spiritual death' was used with reference to Christ (by Mabie and MacLaren) and may have reached Kenyon from such sources. Secondly, the entailed idea that Christ in his suffering was separated from God was taught by these expositors. Thirdly, some sources from both New Thought, and Higher Life and Faith Cure exhibited an anthropology which promoted the immaterial over the material, and within Higher Life and Faith Cure a similar promotion of the spirit over the soul was evident. Given these three roots, along with a highly dualistic cosmology which gave Satan a major role in the drama of redemption (see §§1.4.1; 5.2.1), the main lines of thought were in place which enabled Kenyon to develop JDS teaching in the form known today. The research presented to this point (which is not overturned by that set out in later chapters) suggests that Kenyon was more influenced, with regard to the development of JDS doctrine, by 'orthodox' groups than by 'heterodox' ones. However, it also implies that Kenyon exhibited a fair degree of creativity. He seems to have taken a number of relatively disparate ideas current in his day and drawn them together originally to develop a doctrine that did not exist before him.

A final implication concerns the importance of anthropology in this discussion. It was observed in §3.4 that some modern theologians state that Christ 'died spiritually', or use vaguely similar language, and that some of these are anthropologically monist. Balthasar is a clear example, not only of the use of the term, but of a monism behind it. To use the language of Davids, quoted in §3.2.5, Christ died "as a whole person, not simply as a body." In the language of Moltmann and Rahner (§3.4), Christ experienced "absolute death." It is important to observe the logic behind the potentially easy acceptance by a monist of the idea that Christ 'died spiritually', assuming that a truly and fully human death is being referred to. A

logical monist, asked, “Did Jesus die spiritually?” might answer, “Of course: if he died at all, he died spiritually!” If this logic is employed, ‘Christ died spiritually’ becomes simply another way of saying that he died physically, or, put more simply, that he died, for there is no ontological distinction between body and spirit, or soul (though a variety of functional ones might be suggested). ‘Christ’s spirit’ may be a way of referring to Christ’s whole human being, as much as ‘Christ’s body’ is. A thoroughly monist anthropology requires no further definition of Christ’s ‘spiritual’ death.

The matter is very different, however, in the case of an anthropological dualism. In this case, some sort of distinction is implicitly being made between Christ’s ‘spiritual’ death and his ‘physical’ death (not to mention the possibility of a ‘soulish’ one: see §1.4.8). Physical death is reasonably easy to define, be it in medical or in other terms. In fact, JDS teaching defines it in highly dualistic terms as the departure of the spirit and soul from the body.¹⁹⁴ ‘Spiritual death’, however, requires its own definition, be it a metaphorical one resting upon some analogy with physical death, or an absolute one.

Given the assertion of JDS teaching that only the spirit, as opposed to the soul and the body, is the true self, one might well expect the teaching to define ‘spiritual death’ as the death of the true self, and at this point to declare that Christ had to ‘die spiritually’ so that *he himself* died. In other words, one might expect to find an anthropological definition. Or again, given JDS teaching’s belief in both the divinity and humanity of Christ, expressed in somewhat Apollinarian terms (see §1.4.4), one might expect Christ’s ‘physical’ death to refer to his human death, and his ‘spiritual’ death to refer to some sort of ‘death’ of his divinity: an incarnational definition, however bizarre. Perhaps surprisingly, neither of these is the case. Instead, one finds a broad definition, which includes a range of concepts, which can be regarded, rather than anthropologically, as quasi-theological and ‘satanological’. The first does bear some sort of analogical relationship to JDS doctrine’s definition of physical death, summed up in the concept of separation: as physical death is the separation of the

¹⁹⁴ E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.28-29.

spirit from the body, so ‘spiritual death’ is a separation of the spirit from God. As this bears a degree of similarity to references to death in, for example, Genesis 2:17 and Ephesians 2:1 (§§3.2.1; 3.2.2), it is unsurprising to find this as part of the definition of the term in JDS doctrine, as well as in the work of Henry Mabie, Alexander MacLaren, Kenneth Wuest, Billy Graham, J. I. Packer, and others. What is perhaps more surprising to those who, whether or not they share JDS teaching’s anthropological dualism, do not agree with its cosmological dualism, is that further aspects of JDS doctrine’s definition of ‘spiritual death’ involve Satan so integrally: ‘spiritual death’ is participation in Satan’s nature, and experience of his mastery. The next three chapters will explore these aspects of ‘spiritual death’ as understood by JDS doctrine, starting, in the next chapter, with separation from God.

3.6.3 Key observations

Kenyon’s claim that Christ ‘died spiritually’ was not, *contra* McConnell, an implicit continuation of an explicit ‘spiritualisation’ of Christ’s death in New Thought and Christian Science. However, neither was it a mere extension of established teaching in the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements. In the latter movements, the terminology was rare, and did not denote the full range of ideas which Kenyon invested into it.

The distinctive anthropology that JDS teachers promote, summed up in the famous phrase, “Man *is* a spirit, *has* a soul, and *lives in* a body,” is unsustainable both in its rigid distinction between spirit and soul, and its promotion of the former over the latter. In turn, the use to which this anthropology is implicitly put, in supporting the assertion that Jesus *had* to ‘die spiritually’ in order for his death to be of atoning significance, is invalid.

4 Jesus' 'spiritual death' as separation from God

4.1 Introduction

Hagin and Copeland, following the lead of Kenyon, incorporate three primary concepts into their declaration that Jesus 'died spiritually' (see §§1.4.5-1.4.7). These three beliefs are that in his 'spiritual death', Jesus was separated from God, partook of Satan's nature, and became Satan's prey. The first of these concepts is the one in which the greatest degree of agreement among them is evident, and it forms the focus of the present chapter, whose purpose will be to offer an analysis and evaluation of the belief, as part of this thesis' overall appraisal of JDS doctrine. As an introduction to the evaluative sections, existing criticisms of the JDS belief in Christ's separation will also be elucidated.

In §4.2, the JDS articulation of Jesus' separation from God will be set out. Thereafter, §4.3 will review criticisms of this claim offered by participants in the debate introduced in §§1.5-1.8. In the light of these criticisms, §§4.4 and 4.5 will consider the possibility that a separation occurred (§4.4); and the timing of this possible separation (§4.5). Finally, §4.6 will consider further aspects of the JDS presentation, to do with the nature of the postulated separation, before §4.7 concludes the chapter.

4.2 The JDS articulation of Jesus' separation from God

In JDS teaching, the idea that Jesus was separated from God is consistently linked with his becoming sin.¹ Although the chapter divisions of this thesis create a distance between this separation and the other two elements in JDS teaching, it is important to remember that Jesus' separation from God is in fact seen in continuity with his participating in a sinful, satanic nature (see §§5.2-5.3), and becoming Satan's prey (see §6.2). Thus, imbued with 'sin' and characterised in some way as 'satanic', Jesus was now in a vastly different state from the holy Son who knew the intimate fellowship of God. The implication is that God in his holiness and justice was unable or unwilling to commune with Jesus while the latter was in this state. The 'separation' (a favourite word for this phenomenon in JDS teaching) was thus a

¹ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.126, 135-136; Hagin, *Name*, p.32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-4.

breakdown of relations. Other descriptive terms illustrate this: “turns His back”; “shut out”; “outcast”;² “estranged”;³ “severed”; the opposite of “intimate companionship”.⁴ Clearly, the presentation is of a breakdown and failure of intimacy, a sense of hostility and distance, and presumably of disapproval.

The following subsections analyse five aspects of Kenyon’s, Hagin’s and Copeland’s teaching about the separation on the cross: how long the separation lasted (§4.2.1); whether the relational separation is also to be understood as spatial (§4.2.2); between whom the separation occurred (§4.2.3); and at whose behest the separation occurred (§4.2.4). Thereafter, consideration is given to the sources of these beliefs (§4.2.5).

4.2.1 The timing of the separation

In some varieties of JDS teaching, Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ is traced from Gethsemane.⁵ However, Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland all see its inception while Jesus was on the cross. Kenyon believed that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ and was separated from God after hanging on the cross for three hours.⁶ Hagin and Copeland are not so specific.

All three believe that Jesus was separated from God for three days.⁷ The belief is that while Jesus hung on the cross and lay in the grave, the ‘spiritual death’ that he suffered occurred both while he was physically alive and physically dead. His reunion with God, which marked his ‘spiritual resurrection’, occurred immediately before his physical resurrection. As his ‘spiritual death’ was the cause of his physical death, so too his ‘spiritual resurrection’ (or rebirth) was the immediate cause of his physical resurrection.

² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.126, 135, 136.

³ Hagin, *Name*, p.29.

⁴ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; ‘Worthy’, p.6.

⁵ E.g. F. K. C. Price, quoted in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.157. Kenyon denied this (*Father*, p.136).

⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, p.135.

⁷ Kenyon, *What Happened*, ch.IX; Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.8; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-6. Hagin was less consistent than Kenyon and Copeland: see his *Zoe*, p.45.

4.2.2 The nature of the separation

Separation between persons can be viewed either relationally or spatially. As already stated, the separation of the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ from God is clearly relational for all three authors. However, the very word ‘separation’, as opposed for instance to ‘abandonment’, ‘desertion’, or ‘forsakenness’, might be taken to carry spatial connotations. Kenyon wrote in apparently mixed terms:

He has taken Man’s place, and the whole human race is now represented in Him, and as He hangs there under judgement on the accursed tree, God takes your sin and mine, yes, the sin of the whole world and lets it fall upon the sensitive spirit until the sin of a world has entered into His very Being and He has become the outcast from Heaven, until God turns His back upon Him, and He cries out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. [*sic*]”⁸

The idea of God ‘turning His back’ implies a relational concept. However, the phrase ‘outcast from heaven’ might indicate spatial thinking, if Kenyon thought of heaven in spatial terms. That he did so is suggested by his writing about hell, which would appear to be an equivalent opposite in Kenyon’s mind. He wrote of Christ’s ‘sinking’: “Holy, as God was Holy, pure, as God was pure, yet for you and for me that precious Being sank to the lowest depths of Hell.”⁹ So, although Kenyon thought in relational terms, he also wrote in spatial ones.

Hagin’s prioritisation of relational language is perhaps clearer. Having declared of Christ that “He became like we were, separated from God”, Hagin signified what ‘our’ separation is: “When we talk about a sinner’s spirit being in spiritual death, we do not mean his spirit does not exist... the sinner’s spirit is not in fellowship, and not in relationship with God.” Unsurprisingly, Hagin related this to Adam’s fall. It is revealing that Hagin did not time Adam’s ‘spiritual death’ from his (at least metaphorically) spatial expulsion from Eden’s garden (Genesis 3:23), but from his more relational hiding *within* the garden (Genesis 3:8-10).¹⁰ However, like Kenyon, Hagin could write of Christ going “down into the prison house of suffering.”¹¹

⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.126.

⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.130; cf. p.119: “The Holy, innocent Son of God [went] into Hell’s dark recesses as our sin Substitute.”

¹⁰ Hagin, *Name*, pp.29-31, quotations from pp.29, 30; cf. *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.60.

¹¹ Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7.

Copeland follows Hagin in seeing Adam's 'spiritual death' as occurring while Adam was still in Eden, as indicated for Copeland by Adam's fear (Genesis 3:10),¹² rather than on Adam's expulsion from the garden. This suggests that spatial separation is not foremost in Copeland's mind. He also defines Adam's 'spiritual death' as 'being separated from the life and glory of God'.¹³ Similarly, he writes of Christ's death: "On the cross, Jesus was separated from the glory of God."¹⁴ Copeland defines God's glory as His goodness.¹⁵ This might imply that separation from it is experienced relationally, insofar as goodness possibly suggests kindness. However, the picture is not clear-cut. Copeland refers frequently to Christ's 'going to hell', and certainly describes hell in spatial terms.¹⁶ Thus, although his presentation of God's voice and power being active in hell to restore His Son is relational, it is reasonable to conclude that, for Copeland, Christ's separation from God was spatial as well as relational.

In conclusion to this subsection, although all three authors characterise the separation that occurred on the cross as a relational one, they all also write in spatial terms. It is unclear how much degree of metaphor is being employed in these spatial references. Given their habit of reading the Bible in ways that they would label as 'literal' (see §2.2.3), it seems likely that JDS teachers intend to be taken 'literally' themselves. Jesus was 'sent away from' God and 'travelled down' to hell.

4.2.3 The separated beings

The idea that Jesus was separated from God can be understood, in terms of the beings involved, in three primary ways. First, it can be taken to indicate that the human Jesus was separated from undifferentiated God. Secondly, in trinitarian terms, it can be understood as a statement that the Son was separated from the Father. Thirdly, the concept can be taken to represent both the first two ideas, albeit perhaps paradoxically. Neither Kenyon, Hagin nor Copeland deliberately clarifies which of these three he favours. It seems highly likely, in view of their lack of formal theological education and sophistication (see §§1.3.1-1.3.3; 2.4.2), that none of them

¹² Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14.

¹³ Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14; 'To Know the Glory', p.6.

¹⁴ Copeland, 'To Know the Glory', p.6.

¹⁵ Copeland, 'To Know the Glory', p.5.

¹⁶ Copeland, e.g. *Covenant*, p.39; 'Gates', pp.5, 6.

has considered these possibilities or their implications.¹⁷ However, the language that each uses offers clues as to his assumptions.

Kenyon employed a variety of phrases that suggested both divine-human and intra-trinitarian rupture. Representing the former, he could simply write that Jesus on the cross was “an outcast from God.”¹⁸ Representing the latter, he wrote a few pages earlier that the one who went to hell “under judgment”, “forsaken by the Father”, was “the Eternal Son.”¹⁹ However, he did not discuss these ideas further, in order for instance to explore the apparent contradiction between the two ideas, or wider Christological questions that his statements prompted.

Hagin did not describe the separation in sufficient detail to allow a clear picture to emerge. The only clue lies in his use of the term ‘spirit’, which, given his consistent anthropological use of the word, might suggest that he thought predominantly in terms of the human Jesus being separated from the Godhead. He wrote: “Jesus became sin. His *spirit* was separated from God.”²⁰

Copeland, like Kenyon, makes statements that support both a divine-human separation and an intra-trinitarian one. The former is suggested by his reference to the ‘anointing’ in: “Jesus was separated from the presence of God. He was cut off from the Anointing.” However, this statement is immediately followed by, “He’d known the life and intimate companionship of God within His spirit for all eternity.”²¹ His reference to eternity here indicates, unless he believes that Christ’s humanity is from eternity, that the divine Son was separated from the Father. The fact that this eternal companionship was known in Christ’s ‘spirit’, which term seems to be anthropological in Copeland’s use, probably merely indicates the lack of precision in Copeland’s Christological exposition. In particularly unsophisticated language, Copeland also recognises in his preaching that intra-trinitarian dynamics were at work on the cross: “There’s not any further that God can go because that is

¹⁷ Lie stresses his belief that Kenyon did not (personal correspondence, 6.1.06).

¹⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.136; cf. pp.126, 127; *Presence*, p.205; *What Happened*, p.45.

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.130; cf. p.129, 135; *What Happened*, pp.42, 44.

²⁰ Hagin, *Name*, p.32, italics added; cf. pp.29-30.

²¹ Copeland, ‘Worthy’, p.6.

part of Himself hanging on that cross. And the very inside of God hanging on that cross is severed from Him...”²² However, in this sermon Copeland’s focus quickly moves on to the separation of the human Jesus from undifferentiated God: “... and in that moment of severing, the spirit of Jesus accepting that sin and making it to be sin, He’s separated from God and in that moment He’s mortal man, capable of failure, capable of death.”²³ Like Kenyon, Copeland makes no mention of the possible paradox or even contradiction involved in these statements. As in the case of Kenyon, the impression is created that Copeland has not thought the issues through.

Of these three authors, Copeland is the one who makes the most hortatory use of his understanding of the separation. The humanity, in distinction to the deity, of Christ in his ‘spiritual death’ and ‘rebirth’ is highly significant to Copeland, who regards Jesus, called in the New Testament the ‘Firstborn’ (Romans 8:29, etc.), as “the first born again man – the first man to ever be lifted from death unto life... from spiritual death.”²⁴ The practical inference is clear: born-again Christians today enjoy precisely the heritage of the born-again Christ. In this respect, Copeland appeals to a message he claims to have received from the Holy Spirit: “Don’t you realize that a reborn Man whipped Satan hands down in his own territory... And I’ll say this: any reborn man that knew as much of the Word of God as He did could do the same thing.”²⁵ Victorious Christian living therefore depends upon Jesus’ (regenerate) *human* victory over Satan. That this view contradicts his preaching cited in the previous paragraph, that ‘part’ of God is crucified and his ‘very inside’ is severed from him, rather than the human from the divine, does not gain his attention. It will, however, gain the attention of §4.6.2.²⁶

²² Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

²³ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

²⁴ Kenneth Copeland, *What Satan Saw on the Day of Pentecost*, audio tape 02-0022 (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.), side 1.

²⁵ Copeland, *What Satan Saw*, side 1; cf. *What Happened*, side 2.

²⁶ It will emerge in §§5.3-5.4 that uncertainty exists concerning Christ’s continuing divinity in his ‘spiritual death’. Clearly, this uncertainty coheres only with an emphasis on a human Jesus being separated from undifferentiated God.

4.2.4 The initiative behind the separation

Arguably, there is a difference between a situation in which Jesus *feels* separated from a God who is actually nearby, for instance because Jesus' outward circumstances are appalling, and one in which God has actually distanced himself from Jesus, or shown real hostility to him. In other words, there is a difference between a separation only felt internally by Jesus, and one that was actually initiated by the hostility of the one from whom he feels separated. It is clear from the general tenor of their writings that JDS teachers believe that Christ's separation from God was in this sense actual: to believe in a merely apparent separation robs the doctrine of substitutionary atonement of its internal logic, in their view, and falls short of reflecting the biblical witness. Thus Jesus felt separated from God precisely because God actively shunned him. This is clearest in Kenyon's exposition, but implicit in Hagin's and Copeland's.²⁷

Relational separation between God and the human Jesus, or even between the Father and the Son, is in JDS thinking a separation between two unequal partners, in which relationship the presence of God is far more important to Jesus (the difference, in fact, between 'spiritual life' and 'spiritual death') than the other way round. Also, Jesus is dependent, and God is in control. Much JDS testimony centres on God's action, of which Christ seems merely the suffering object. Kenyon especially wrote at length in these terms, for instance writing graphically of "God taking our sin nature, hideous spiritual death, and making it strike, as the Prophet says, upon His [Christ's] soul."²⁸ Nevertheless, this is not the only element in their portrayal. All three make it clear that Jesus was actively involved in giving his own life and accepting his own 'spiritual death'.²⁹ Thus while their message is clear that Jesus experienced separation from God because God rejected him, rather than the other way round, this rejection was, with reasonable consistency, because of Christ's own

²⁷ This is despite, in Hagin's case, the analogical separation of the first Adam occurring through Adam's action (hiding), rather than God's action (expelling).

²⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.125-127, 135-138, quotation from p.125; cf. *What Happened*, pp.43-47.

²⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.136; Hagin, *Redeemed*, p.64; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, pp.7, 13, 15. However, on this point Kenyon vacillated. He also wrote, "You see, on the cross He died spiritually, a partaker of sin – not of His own volition. God laid upon His spirit our sin" (*Advanced Bible Course*, p.282, quoted in Lie, 'Theology', p.101).

voluntary acceptance of the ‘sin nature’ which God, in his justice, must reject.³⁰ This is the closest that JDS teaching comes to portraying any sort of paradoxical unity-in-separation between Christ and God. There is not a strong exposition of the complete marriage of resolute paternal and filial will and purpose expressed, for instance, as the outcome of the Gethsemane prayers. This failure will receive further attention later, in §4.6.3.

4.2.5 Sources for the doctrine

These authors of course believe that their ideas are taught in the Bible, which is the sole source they explicitly cite. They believe that it is directly stated with reference to Jesus himself, and is also entailed in their understanding of his substitutionary experience, in which he went through the ‘spiritual death’ that Adam had brought on himself and on the rest of humanity in the fall. Thus the biblical basis commences with material in Genesis that indicates to them that Adam and Eve, as a consequence of their sin, experienced ‘spiritual death’ that involved separation from God, and led in time to physical death (Genesis 2:17 [cf. §3.2.1]; 3:8-10, 19, 23).³¹

They find biblical evidence for Jesus’ own experience especially in his ‘cry of dereliction’: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46 = Mark 15:34). This is not analysed in any detail, but is simply taken to indicate that Jesus was separated, and subjectively experienced this separation. It is evident in every case cited below that the cry is held in close association with, among others, 2 Corinthians 5:21.³² It is not clear in every case, as discussion is sometimes too brief, that the cry is actually being interpreted in the light of the Pauline text. It might simply be that Christ’s and Paul’s meanings are assumed, and then a commonality discerned on the basis of these assumptions. However, in some cases,³³ 2 Corinthians

³⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.125-126; Hagin, *Name*, p.33; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, p.24.

³¹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.91, 219 in the light of one another; Hagin, *New Birth*, p.9; *Name*, pp.30-31; Copeland, *What Satan Saw*, side 1.

³² Kenyon, *Father*, p.126, *What Happened*, pp.43-44; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6; *Name*, pp.29-32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.4-5.

³³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.126; *What Happened*, p.43; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

5:21 does seem to function as a ‘key to unlock’ the cry. Very occasionally, allusions to Galatians 3:13 are juxtaposed with 2 Corinthians 5:21.³⁴

Further, their understanding that this state lasted until Jesus was ‘born again in hell’ immediately prior to his physical resurrection rests, for instance, on Acts 2:24,³⁵ which is taken to indicate that Christ’s physical resurrection occurred immediately after God’s loosing him from the ‘pains’ (therefore consciously experienced) of (‘spiritual’) death.

While each author points to the Bible as the only source of his thinking, there is reason to assume that his interpretation of the relevant passages is not originally conceived by him. Hagin seems to be directly dependent on Kenyon, in view of his widespread plagiarism of the latter (see §§1.3.2; 1.6.3), sometimes of passages directly relevant to JDS teaching (see §6.2.2). In turn Copeland probably depends on Hagin and Kenyon (see §1.3.3). Kenyon’s sources are less clear. As discussed in §2.5.2, he listened to, read, and appreciated the teaching of a number of prominent leaders in the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements, but McConnell especially claims that he drew upon themes in New Thought and Christian Science.³⁶

A survey of both sets of sources achieves scant results. Higher Life and Faith Cure authors paid little attention to the concept of Christ’s separation from God, or to the biblical passages, such as records of the ‘cry of dereliction’, that might undergird it. Their interest was far more consistently in the ‘blood’. However, attestation to this theme was not entirely absent. A. J. Gordon, the author Kenyon quoted most, wrote that Christ “was forsaken of God, during those fearful agonies.”³⁷

³⁴ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.136, 137.

³⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.132; *What Happened*, p.59; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, pp.2-3; cf. Hagin’s use of Acts 2:27 in *Name*, pp.32-33.

³⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, part 2; cf. Perriman, *Faith*, pp.66, 70.

³⁷ Gordon, *In Christ*, p.41. He also referred to the ‘cry of dereliction’ (*In Christ*, pp.46, 59), but for other expository purposes. References in Mabie’s work to Jesus’ separation from God have already been noted (§3.3.2).

New Thought and Christian Science writers did not teach that Jesus was separated from God on the cross. Mary Baker Eddy and Ralph Waldo Trine both referred to the ‘cry of dereliction’, but with different results. For Eddy,

The burden of that hour was terrible beyond human conception. The distrust of mortal minds, disbelieving the purpose of his mission, was a million times sharper than the thorns which pierced his flesh. The real cross, which Jesus bore up the hill of grief, was the world’s hatred of Truth and Love. Not the spear nor the material cross wrung from his faithful lips the plaintive cry, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” It was the possible loss of something more important than human life which moved him, – the possible misapprehension of the sublimest influence of his career. This dread added the drop of gall to his cup.³⁸

Trine, on the other hand, declared:

Concerning that love and care he never had had any doubt; and he had no doubt here. When he cried near the close: ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,’ he neither thought: nor said: ‘My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ The real meaning of these Aramaic words is: ‘My God, for this end was I kept. I am fulfilling my destiny. I am dying for the truth that Thou gavest me; to this end was I born; to this end I am now come.’³⁹

It is clear that neither Eddy’s understanding nor Trine’s bizarre rendition of the cry resembles Kenyon’s viewpoint.⁴⁰ If any doctrinal influence on this point can be traced among Kenyon’s immediate predecessors, it was the prominent proponent of Faith Cure, and opponent of Christian Science, A. J. Gordon.

4.2.6 Conclusion to §4.2

Such is Kenyon’s, Hagin’s and Copeland’s case: a separation occurred which lasted until just before Christ’s physical resurrection. While the separation was relational, it is also understood to have been spatial. In this separation, God was turning aside in justice from the sin that Christ had become. This could be expressed as either the human Jesus suffering separation from God, or abandonment of the Son by the Father. This understanding is seen by them to be biblically based. In fact, the texts they refer to are relatively few in number, and Jesus’ ‘cry of dereliction’ receives the most attention, often in association with 2 Corinthians 5:21, while the timing of the separation primarily finds support in Acts 2:24. There is no evidence that Kenyon

³⁸ Eddy, *Science*, pp.50-51.

³⁹ Trine, *Man*, ch.16.

⁴⁰ If, as McConnell in particular asserts, Kenyon had been influenced in this respect most of all by New Thought, one might expect his statements to be that Jesus was separated from the Christ. In fact, references to ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ in this context are interchangeable in his writings (e.g. *Father*, p.127).

gained his view from New Thought or Christian Science, but it may have been supported by testimony within Faith Cure.

The rest of this chapter will consider existing evaluations of this position, and offer further discussion about its possible usefulness. At this stage, however, it is worth observing the lack of sophistication in its exposition. This is understandable, given the background of JDS teachers and the context and genre of JDS teaching. Nevertheless, it weakens the teaching, for it renders it vulnerable to several criticisms that might not have such force if obvious implications of the teaching had been explicated in the first place.

4.3 Criticisms of the JDS position

Among critics of JDS doctrine, such as several of those reviewed in §§1.5-1.8, voices are raised in concern about exegesis of key texts. In other words, a biblical case is made for resisting the JDS account of this alleged aspect of Christ's death. To these criticisms the thesis now turns.

Not all critics of JDS teaching distance themselves entirely from the articulation of Jesus' separation from God set out above. Perriman is perhaps the most accommodating. He accepts that Christ's 'cry of dereliction', for instance, can be understood as JDS doctrine takes it, though he is equally quick to observe that it does not have to be.⁴¹ Nevertheless, most critics raise significant objections. Some critics claim that the separation simply did not occur. Their criticisms vary between the charge that JDS teaching misunderstands Christ's 'cry of dereliction' and the claim that such a separation would be impossible. Other criticisms, accepting that some sort of separation occurred, complain that the JDS view is exaggerated. The exaggeration is seen to relate to the length of time that the separation lasted, and/or to the degree to which it occurred. These will be presented in turn: the possibility of a separation in §4.3.1; and an exaggeration of it in §4.3.2.

⁴¹ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.111-112.

4.3.1 Criticisms concerning the possibility of a separation

While some critics believe that a degree of separation occurred, others deny it entirely. Brandon writes, “Even in Christ’s darkest hour, the Father and Son relationship [*sic*] continued unbroken.”⁴² Similarly, Bowman opines, “Although Jesus’ words here [Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34] may seem to imply that he really was forsaken or abandoned by God, that is in fact not the case.”⁴³

Both these authors agree that JDS doctrine has misunderstood Christ’s ‘cry of dereliction’. For Brandon, the cry did not articulate a rupture in relationship, but a lack of protection from the horrors of crucifixion.⁴⁴ Bowman appeals to other interpretations of the cry. He makes use of the argument that one can feel deserted by God without this actually being the case. His main concern, however, is that the whole of Psalm 22, the beginning of which the cry quotes, should be heard, including its latter sections of hope and trust. Thus, on the basis that “the psalmist is *not* saying that God has *really* abandoned or forsaken him”, Jesus too “was confident that God had not really abandoned him at all.”⁴⁵ None of these understandings of the cry is original. Whether they are accurate or helpful is a matter which requires further discussion, to which §4.4 will be devoted.

Another argument that Bowman employs in opposing the possibility of Christ’s abandonment by God is that such an event would be impossible, however it were conceived. Both an intra-trinitarian schism between Father and Son, and a dissolution of the divine and human in Christ (which he sees as a temporary cessation of the divinity of Christ) are inconceivable to his theology and Christology.⁴⁶ Therefore, Christ merely felt abandoned, without this being the case. Hanegraaff, who is prepared to countenance some sort of very temporary ‘forsaken’-ness (his inverted commas), agrees that a genuine division is, however, quite impossible.⁴⁷

⁴² Brandon, *Health*, p.127.

⁴³ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.171; cf. p.174.

⁴⁴ Brandon, *Health*, pp.126-127.

⁴⁵ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.172-173, quoting p.172 (*italics original*).

⁴⁶ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.173, 175.

⁴⁷ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161 (cf. pp.169, 174, 175).

Again, such concerns are far from original. However, they are widely challenged. The possibility of a separation will therefore be explored at some length in §4.4.

4.3.2 Criticisms concerning exaggeration of the separation

As has already been stated, criticisms include complaints both that the length of time for which this separation lasted is unwarrantably stretched in the JDS presentation, and that the nature of the separation experienced by Christ is exaggerated. With regard to the length of time over which it occurred, appeal is made by critics to those verses which indicate that Christ experienced God's presence and blessing immediately after his physical death (e.g. Luke 23:43, 46). On this basis, it is concluded that any separation that had taken place was now finished.⁴⁸ While the issue of timing cannot claim to be the most important aspect of the controversy surrounding JDS doctrine, it is nevertheless worthy of discussion, particularly in view of the interest taken recently in 'Holy Saturday' by theologians from both Roman Catholic and Protestant quarters. This matter will thus form the substance of §4.5.

Criticisms that the nature or extent of the separation has been exaggerated are not expressed with sufficient detail or clarity for a response to be mounted. For instance, McConnell willingly admits that Christ was 'alienated' from God ("because of man's sin"), but is unwilling to accept Copeland's terminology, that he was 'severed' (which is "more" than alienation).⁴⁹ McConnell offers no clear indication, however, as to the manner in which being severed is 'more' than being alienated. While a guess could be offered, any subsequent discussion would inevitably be about that guess rather than about McConnell's actual view. In similar vein, Hanegraaff accepts that Christ was mysteriously and "momentarily 'forsaken' by the Father", but this forsakenness is less than division: "the Godhead cannot be divided, or else God, as revealed by Scripture, would cease to exist – an impossibility."⁵⁰ As in McConnell's case, no discussion is offered about the difference between being forsaken and being

⁴⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.128-129; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.162, 165-167. Neither of these authors refers in these passages to separation as such, but they indicate their belief that Christ's redeeming suffering was over at the point of his physical death.

⁴⁹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120.

⁵⁰ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161.

divided, and so no sustained response can be offered. All that can be usefully observed is that at this point the debaters seem to be unduly pedantic, ‘straining at gnats’ in order to find some distance between their own views and those of JDS teaching. It might be reasonably speculated that there is no significant semantic distinction between being ‘alienated’ and ‘severed’, or between being ‘forsaken’ and ‘divided’, other than in the connoted harshness of the various terms.

4.3.3 Conclusion to §4.3

The criticisms of the JDS understanding of a separation between Jesus and God on the cross and in the grave have raised three significant questions. The first is about the ‘cry of dereliction’ itself. Clearly, its possible meaning(s) need to be considered as part of the construction of a view concerning this postulated separation. Secondly, the question has been raised about whether such a separation was even possible, and if so, how it can be conceived. Furthermore, the timing of the alleged separation requires further thought. These questions will gain the attention of the rest of the chapter.

4.4 The possibility of a separation

§4.3 indicated that, among other issues, a key consideration concerning Christ’s possible separation from God is interpretation of his ‘cry of dereliction’, and of various other New Testament data. §4.4.1 will review past interpretations of the cry. §4.4.2 will offer an exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, where it is recorded. §4.4.3 will consider wider New Testament perspectives relevant to the possibility of a separation.

4.4.1 History of interpretation of the ‘cry of dereliction’⁵¹

Interpretation of the cry did not ‘get off to a good start’. The attendant crowd’s understanding, that Jesus was calling for Elijah, is dismissed immediately by Matthew’s and Mark’s narratives. He was calling God. The centurion, on the other hand, echoed the evangelists’ assessment (Matthew 27:54; cf. 2:15, etc.; Mark 15:39;

⁵¹ Ulrich Luz offers a historical survey of interpretation of the cry, tracing the effect, as he sees it, of a diminution in belief that the incarnate Christ subsisted as two natures in one person (*Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus: Mt 26-28* [Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 2002], pp.335-342).

cf. 1:1). In Mark, it might have been the cry that led him to this view. This is not entirely clear, for Jesus offered a later (inarticulate?) cry (Mark 15:37), and it may have been this later cry that won the centurion's approval. However, if it was the 'cry of dereliction', this might suggest that he heard it as an expression of impressive and noble trust. However, when Matthew retained the cry, he crafted the centurion's assessment of the sufferer in such a way that what impressed the centurion was now not the noble way in which Christ deported himself, but a number of extraneous signs (Matthew 27:54). If Matthew is the earliest extant interpreter of Mark's record of the cry, it seems he distanced it from an expression of noble trust that was recognised by onlookers. The other two canonised gospels simply omit the saying. This might suggest that their authors, if aware of it, saw it as a statement of despair, and thus as somehow undermining their presentation of Christ's death, for certainly both of them portray this as selfless (Luke 23:28; John 19:26-27), trusting (Luke 23:43; John 19:28a), and noble (Luke 23:47; John 19:30). Even this consideration, however, does not provide a certain answer, for Luke and John may simply have been unaware of the tradition which included this saying (this is, admittedly, far less likely for Luke than for John, for the close verbal similarity of Luke 23:44 with Mark 15:33 – concerning the three hours of darkness – suggests redactional dependence at this point).

The church in its earlier centuries focused little on the 'cry of dereliction' in its discussions about Christ's death. Athanasius (c.293-373) was challenged by the Arians into discussing the cry, for to them it and similar prayers were evidence that the Word was not eternal God. In response, Athanasius, defending the impassible deity of the Word, denied the possibility of an intra-trinitarian rupture, and regarded the cry as an entirely human one, as opposed to one uttered by the Word.⁵² Ambrose (c.340-397) accepted that Christ felt separated, but not that he was.⁵³ John Chrysostom (347-407) effectively 'turned round' the cry, so that it became evidence that Christ was "no adversary of God" and was "of one mind with Him that begat Him."⁵⁴

⁵² Athanasius, *Against the Arians* III ch.XXIX:54-56 (NPNF II/IV, pp.423-424).

⁵³ Ambrose, *Faith* II, VII:56 (NPNF II/X, p.231).

⁵⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homily* LXXXVIII (NPNF I/X, p.521).

Augustine, in his exposition of Psalm 22, appealed to Romans 6:6 in order to claim that the ‘cry of dereliction’ contained “not the words of righteousness, but of my sins. For it is the old man nailed to the Cross that speaks, ignorant even of the reason why God hath forsaken him.”⁵⁵ Augustine thereby distanced the cry from the experience of Jesus himself. However, when expounding the creed, Augustine pursued a different argument. Referring to the cry, he did on this occasion concede that Christ’s experience was expressed, and that he was deserted, but only in a limited manner: “He did as it were leave Him for present felicity, not leave Him for eternal immortality.”⁵⁶

Further slight but intriguing evidence for the early church’s understanding of the cry lies in its record in the so-called *Gospel of Peter* 5:19. There, Jesus on the cross cried “My power, [my] power, you have forsaken me.” It is hard to date this evidence. The Akhmîm codex in which the words appear comes perhaps from the seventh to ninth centuries. From the time of its publication in 1892, it was identified with the second century *Gospel of Peter*. Foster questions this identification, though his conclusions are challenged by Lührmann.⁵⁷ Also, whether this record is independent of the canonised gospels is a moot point. Cameron is confident that it is, and that it reproduces early oral tradition.⁵⁸ Kazen takes the opposite view, regarding the *Gospel of Peter* as a late redaction dependent on the synoptics.⁵⁹ If it is a redaction, the change from ‘God’ to ‘power’ presents the intriguing possibility that here Jesus discovers that he no longer has miraculous power, and so cannot rescue himself from the cross.⁶⁰ Thus he cries in disappointment. However, as Hurtado observes, it is more than possible that ‘Power’ is simply a circumlocution for ‘God’.⁶¹

Moving to the church’s second millennium, Aquinas took the cry to mean that God had not protected Jesus from the wider suffering of the cross. It seems that Aquinas

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, Psalm 22 (NPNF I/VIII, p.58).

⁵⁶ Augustine, *On the Creed* 10 (NPNF I/III, p.373).

⁵⁷ Paul Foster, ‘Are there any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*?’, *NTS* 52 (2006), pp.1-28; cf. Dieter Lührmann, ‘Kann es Wirklich Keine Frühe Handschrift des Petrusangeliums Geben?’, *NovT* XLVIII.4 (2006), pp.379-383.

⁵⁸ Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1982), p.77.

⁵⁹ Thomas Kazen, ‘Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?’ *NTS* 51:4 (2005), pp.561-578 (p.569).

⁶⁰ So R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), p.653, n.47.

⁶¹ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, p.446.

could not conceive of Jesus' being separated from God, for the "higher part" of his soul "enjoyed perfect bliss all the while he was suffering."⁶²

By the time of the reformation, the approach to the cry had changed, and it was now understood as an expression of real abandonment. Luther, quoting Matthew 27:46, wrote in terms remarkably similar in some respects to those used by Kenneth Copeland:

Christ fought with death and felt nothing in His heart but that He was forsaken of God. And in fact He was forsaken by God. This does not mean that the deity was separated from the humanity – for in this person who is Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, deity and humanity are so united that they can never be separated or divided – but that the deity withdrew and hid so that it seemed, and anyone who saw it might say, "This is not God, but a mere man, and a troubled and desperate man at that." The humanity was left alone, the devil had free access to Christ, and the deity withdrew its power and let the humanity fight alone.⁶³

Luther clearly wanted to differentiate between separation and withdrawal, preferring the latter to the former as a description of the occurrence on the cross. This must not, however, be regarded as a pronounced 'softening' of the experience in Luther's mind. It was still forsakenness, and was "sublime, spiritual suffering, which He felt in His soul, a suffering that far surpasses all physical suffering."⁶⁴

Calvin's portrayal was more nuanced: Christ "felt himself to be in some measure estranged from" his Father, but was concurrently "assured by faith that God was reconciled to him." This feeling of estrangement was not mistaken, for God instigated it as judgment of the guilt Christ 'took' as he "endured the punishments due to us."⁶⁵ Christ's experience of forsakenness was thus deep and real:

Certainly no abyss can be imagined more dreadful than to feel that you are abandoned and forsaken of God, and not heard when you invoke him, just as if he had conspired your destruction. To such a degree was Christ dejected, that in the depth of his agony he was forced to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The view taken by some, that he here expressed the opinion

⁶² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a. 46:8 ET Thomas Gilby, gen. ed., (Westminster: Blackfriars, 1958), vol.54, p.37.

⁶³ Luther, *Psalm 8*, *LW* 12, pp.126-127.

⁶⁴ Luther, *Psalm 8*, *LW* 12, p.124.

⁶⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* Vol.III, ET William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 [1558]), pp.318-319; cf. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Ps.22:1) ET James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 [1557]), p.361.

of others rather than his own conviction, is most improbable; for it is evident that the expression was wrung from the anguish of his inmost soul.⁶⁶

In subsequent centuries, protestant Christianity continued occasionally to refer to the ‘cry of dereliction’ as evidence of a separation on the cross. The British pastor-theologian R. W. Dale was unequivocal that this occurred.⁶⁷ Other nineteenth century expositors took a different view. Schleiermacher’s (1768-1834) preaching occasioned Barth’s later ire by reasoning (with reference to Psalm 22:1) that, as Barth put it, “In adopting the words Jesus shows that... even at this moment he could think just as clearly and cheerfully about his death as in his last addresses to his disciples.” Knowing the whole psalm, Jesus indicated consciousness of “joy in” God.⁶⁸ No separation, clearly, was perceived by Christ. This can be understood as consonant with Schleiermacher’s portrayal of Jesus’ “consciousness of the singularity of His knowledge of God and of His existence in God.”⁶⁹

In contrast to both Dale and Schleiermacher, John McLeod Campbell (1800-1872) denied any separation on the cross, while taking the cry with great seriousness. The cry, firmly interpreted in the light of the whole psalm, indicated not Christ’s abandonment by the Father, but his suffering human enmity. McLeod Campbell’s comments are elucidated by his wider programme to rescue Scottish federal Calvinism from a dualistic contrasting between a wrathful God and a loving Christ who endured God’s wrath. For McLeod Campbell, the wrath Christ endured was primarily that of humanity. God the Father and Christ the Son stood in complete unity in the work of redemption.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Bk II, ch.XVI, ET Henry Beveridge (Vol.I, London: James Clarke & Co., Limited, 1962 [1536]), p.444; cf. p.446.

⁶⁷ R. W. Dale, *The Atonement* (23rd edn London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1904 [1875]), p.60. The similar view of C. H. Spurgeon was mentioned in §3.3.2.

⁶⁸ Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher* ET Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982 [1923/4]), p.84. For Barth, Schleiermacher’s rendition was one in which “the word of dereliction loses all its offensiveness and changes into a statement of its opposite” (p.84).

⁶⁹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* ET John Oman (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994 [rev’d 1821]), p.247; cf. Michael Jenkins and Stephen Breck Reid, ‘John McLeod Campbell on Christ’s Cry of Dereliction: A Case Study in Trinitarian Hermeneutics’ *Evangelical Quarterly*, pp.135-149, 70:2 (1998), p.145.

⁷⁰ John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (London: MacMillan and Co., 5th edn 1878), pp.224, 240-242; cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

Coming to the twentieth century, many see the cry as important and even foundational to an understanding of the atonement, giving it significant weight in their articulations.⁷¹ Moltmann especially grants it central place in his cruciform trinitarianism.⁷² It is noteworthy that many of these authors, and others, stand in line with JDS teachers in interpreting the cry as consistent with the Pauline understanding of Christ's suffering expressed especially in Galatians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.⁷³ They believe that a genuine separation of some sort occurred.

In conclusion to §4.4.1, interpretations of the 'cry of dereliction' are noteworthy for their sheer variety. Of importance to discussion about the alleged 'heterodoxy' of JDS teaching is the observation that views vaguely resembling this aspect of JDS doctrine are to be found amongst this variety. That perhaps the greatest resemblance is to be found in the writing of such a prominent figure as Martin Luther tends at least superficially to support the 'orthodoxy' of the JDS view.

4.4.2 Exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34

The brief 'cry of dereliction' is recorded in only two canonised gospels: Matthew and Mark. The intentions of the evangelists in recording the cry will be considered in this subsection. First, it is important to concede the brevity of the cry and the dangers both of basing conclusions on speculation and of importing possibly foreign theological concepts into the phrase.⁷⁴ It has already been noted that JDS teachers utilise 2 Corinthians 5:21 in assessing the cry. The use of this particular text, Galatians 3:13 and others like them to 'aid', illegitimately, in interpreting Matthew's

⁷¹ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/2, p.365; III/2, p.603; IV/1, pp.215, 239; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, especially p.125: "Primacy must go to the cry of abandonment"; Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope* ET M. Douglas Meeks (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1975), p.79; *Crucified God*, pp.225-229; Leon Morris, *The Cross of Jesus* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994 [1988]), especially pp.67-75; John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Leicester: IVP, 1986), pp.78-82. Of these, Moltmann especially chooses this cry for its service in his attempt to provide a Christian answer to human abandonment, which attempt is Moltmann's major soteriology.

⁷² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (ET Margaret Kohl, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979 [1977]), p.59: "Theology can receive its divine justification in Christian terms only when it continually and fully actualizes and makes present the death-cry of the forsaken Christ." Cf. *Crucified God*, p.153 and p.225: "A radical theology of the cross" must give an "answer to the question of the dying Christ."

⁷³ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/1, p.398, III/2, p.602, IV/1, p.236; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.49-50, 122, 201; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.242; Morris, *Cross*, pp.77-78; Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), p.146.

⁷⁴ Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983), p.268.

and Mark's intentions occurs outside JDS teaching as well.⁷⁵ The weakness of foreign importation is also displayed, however, by those who argue that God could not really have abandoned Jesus, for such a thing would be 'impossible'.

Also, it is important to note that the cry is itself a quotation.⁷⁶ Recognition that it comes from Psalm 22 creates two issues. One is the need to concede that the wording is governed by the psalmist, not by Jesus. Since this is the case, it might be argued, the wording should not be pressed too closely to indicate *Jesus'*, as opposed to the psalmist's, thinking. However, the fact that Jesus chose to quote this passage as opposed to quoting any other or expressing himself in his own words means that it is 'owned' by him. The wording can be regarded as a genuine expression of his mind, as portrayed by Matthew and Mark. The other issue is the extent to which the whole psalm can be regarded as being in Jesus' thought, rather than just the first clause. This is moot. Belief that it was goes back at least as far as to McLeod Campbell,⁷⁷ and continues to be represented.⁷⁸ However, France disagrees strongly: "it is illegitimate to interpret Jesus' words as referring to the part of the psalm that he did *not* echo."⁷⁹ Certainty on this point is elusive. Suffice it to say that no firm conclusion should be arrived at that rests primarily on another part of the psalm to the exclusion of its first verse, for instance that Jesus cannot really have been abandoned by God on the basis of Psalm 22:24.

The cry is grammatically framed as a question. It is reasonable to start with the supposition, therefore, that the speaker is seeking information because he is at the

⁷⁵ E.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge: CUP, 1959), p.458; R. Alan Cole, *Mark* (TNTC. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p.243; Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, p.78. Contrast France's wise caution (*Mark*, p.653).

⁷⁶ Morris regards it as unprovable that Jesus was quoting (*Cross of Jesus*, p.71). Nevertheless, to distance the cry from the psalm seems tendentious.

⁷⁷ McLeod Campbell, *Nature of Atonement*, p.237.

⁷⁸ E.g. David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), p.355; Sherman E. Johnson, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 2nd edn 1972 [1960]), p.256; Dennis W. Jowers, 'The Theology of the Cross as Theology of the Trinity: A Critique of Jürgen Moltmann's Staurocentric Trinitarianism', pp.245-266, *Tyndale Bulletin* 52.2 (2001), pp.258-259, quoting Erich Fromm; (tentatively) D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp.428-429.

⁷⁹ R. T. France, *Matthew* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p. 398 (italics original); also W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr, *Matthew Volume III* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), p.625; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: MacMillan, 2nd edn 1966 [1952]), p.594.

very least ‘puzzled’,⁸⁰ or more probably, given the strength of the word ‘forsaken’, bewildered and appalled. However, verbal communication often exhibits significant disparity between its grammatical form and its semantic function. Despite its grammatical form, then, it may not be seeking to elicit information so much as to operate as a declaration – of shock, of horror, of consternation – and even as a complaint. Something profound and appalling seems to have happened that has caused this violent emotional reaction in the speaker.

When discussion turns to what this happening may have been, the immediate literary context seems to supply an obvious answer: Jesus is being tortured, hanging on a cross. He means, “Why have you abandoned me *to this*?” Insofar as Psalm 22 can be taken as prophetically referring to Jesus, it seems to confirm this (Psalm 22:6-8, 14-18 find echoes in the crucifixion narratives). It is surely natural that this appalling end to Jesus’ life should have wrung the cry from his lips. He has served his God faithfully all his life, has always acted on God’s behalf, has always prioritised obedience to God, and has fought off strong temptation to do otherwise (Matthew 4:1-10 = Mark 1:13). The covenant promises, interpreted by psalmist and prophet, declared that he should expect long healthy life and many sons (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 1; 91; 121; 127; Isaiah 60; etc.). Now he meets a criminal’s end. He has every right to cry out appalled. Thus he “utters the complaint of the righteous sufferer.”⁸¹ It is possible that Christ’s cry came *now* because of the cumulative effect of relentless cruelty that finally gave him voice, with the taunting suggestion that God might indeed rescue him being the ‘last straw’ (Matthew 27:43).

However, the evangelists perhaps do not intend this interpretation. They present Jesus as a man who knew from an early stage that he would die at the hands of the authorities, and would do so for a godly purpose (Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:28; 26:28 = Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:45; 14:24). By the time he reached the cross, he had already been through a massive crisis of resolve, a crisis which he had won (Matthew

⁸⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p.722. ‘Puzzled’ is, however, perhaps an inaccurate understatement. In *Cross of Jesus*, Morris writes of ‘perplexity’ (p.68). This seems more appropriate.

⁸¹ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p.683.

26:36-44 = Mark 14:32-40). Furthermore, once he hung there, he had already experienced prolonged psychological and physical torture (Matthew 26:67-68; 27:26-31, 35; Mark 15:15, 17-20, 24). Throughout these abuses, according to Matthew's and Mark's silence, Jesus uttered not a word of complaint to God or people, and attempted no resistance or retaliation. It is thus also possible that some new appalling tragedy led to these words. If the latter is so, a natural place to seek an answer concerning what the tragedy may have been is in the strongest word in the cry: ἐγκατέλιπες ('forsaken', 'abandoned' or 'deserted'). Although Matthew and Mark do not emphasise Christ's lifelong communion with his heavenly Father to the extent that Luke and John do, nevertheless the impression gained is that Jesus had always known fellowship with God. Certainly at pivotal moments in his life he received overt paternal reassurance and sustenance (Matthew 3:17; 17:5 = Mark 1:11; 9:7). Was this fellowship and assurance missing now, as Jesus hung on the cross? Was heaven silent, and God 'distant'? The evidence is meagre, speculation must be tentative, and certainty is impossible. But *perhaps* Jesus' cry testified to a genuine sense of desertion by his heavenly Father.⁸² Admittedly, if the whole psalm is being alluded to, then Psalm 22:24 points away from a relational abandonment of Christ by God.⁸³ However, as stated earlier, it cannot be assumed that the evangelists meant their readers to conclude that Christ was alluding to the whole psalm.

Whether Jesus was abandoned 'inwardly', or the abandonment to which he testified only referred to his appalling outward circumstances,⁸⁴ the rest of the cry helps to

⁸² Many commentators see little or no 'perhaps': the cry is of (at least a feeling of) dereliction. So Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), p.73 ("abandoned"); James A. Brooks, *Mark* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), p.261 ("abandoned by God"); Cole, *Mark*, p.243 ("unclouded communion... broken"); Cranfield, *Mark*, p.458 ("not merely a felt, but a real, abandonment"); Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), p.297 ("feels left alone"); France, *Gospel of Mark*, p.653 ("feels abandoned"); France, *Matthew*, p.398 ("real sense of alienation"); D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1995), p.844 ("breach with his Father"); Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, p.71 ("a real abandonment"); Morris, *Matthew*, p.722 ("communion... mysteriously broken"); Stott, *Cross of Christ*, p.81 ("actual and dreadful separation"); Tidball, *Message of the Cross*, p.145 ("his Father had deserted him").

⁸³ Other 'messianic' psalms might be employed as well, e.g. Ps.16:10 LXX (οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου). However, Kenyon used Psalm 88 to argue that Christ in his 'spiritual death' was in despair (*Father*, p.127). Here the psalmist was like those ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς σου ἀπώσθησαν (Psalm 88:5, LXX).

⁸⁴ So Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a. 47:3 (ET vol.54, p.63); Brandon, *Health*, pp.126-127; E. P. Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), p.294.

indicate Jesus' response to the horror he was experiencing. The wording suggests continuing faith in God, and a degree of continuing fellowship with God. Although Jesus was experiencing some form of abandonment, be it to his circumstances or to an inner God-forsaken silence, the very fact that he asked the question is testimony to his prevailing dependence on God and expectation that God could be turned to in the midst of this torment. Furthermore, Christ's use of 'my', governed admittedly by the psalm, speaks of his personal relationship with this God. His question was thus essentially paradoxical: "You are the God who is not available; yet you are the God who can be both related to and spoken to." This paradox is especially stark if the sense of abandonment was an inner one.

4.4.3 A 'canonical' view

It is clear from exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 that these verses do not demand that a separation occurred. Matthew and Mark may simply not have intended such an idea. However, it is equally clear that the wording does not rule out the possibility. It has already emerged that, for JDS doctrine, 2 Corinthians 5:21 (and very occasionally Galatians 3:13) is 'pressed into service' at this point. As stated in §4.4.2, it is not valid to use 2 Corinthians 5:21 or any Pauline text as an aid in seeking Matthew's and Mark's intentions. However, if exegesis leaves an open question as to whether some inner abandonment was felt by the Matthean/Markan Jesus, it may be reasonable, at a 'canonical' level of biblical reflection, to posit that Jesus experienced something to which both the cry and Paul's reflections attest, and to an understanding of which each might contribute in a different way.

However, before discussion turns to the Pauline testimony, it must return to the silence of Luke and John concerning the 'cry of dereliction'. It has already been stated that, while John may not have known of this tradition, Luke's apparent redactional dependence on Mark at this point makes his ignorance unlikely. Furthermore, John 16:32 explicitly denies the absence of God from Christ. Of course, an artificial harmony between the biblical voices need not be sought, still less engineered. Nevertheless, the point can simply be made that an argument from Luke's and John's silence regarding the cry is precisely that, with all the potential

pitfalls attendant upon arguments from silence, and John 16:32 may be a generic statement about God's presence with Christ throughout his ministry, rather than a diagnosis of the state of affairs during the crucifixion itself.

Discussion can now turn to Paul. 2 Corinthians 5:21 will receive fuller attention in §5.5.3. At this stage of the discussion, it is sufficient to observe that Paul intended to indicate by way of his terse metaphor that the crucified Jesus was being treated as if he had sinned, at least by the people who crucified him. To believe that *God* treated Jesus as if he had sinned, and as a result ceased reassuring personal fellowship with him, is certainly not the only way of understanding these texts. It is, however, one with a long held and widespread Christian tradition.

Those who hold it challenge the counter-argument that a separation would be impossible. Essentially, their point is that the counter-argument invalidly presumes *a priori* decisions about what it is possible or impossible for God to do.⁸⁵ For instance, to Hanegraaff who declares, “the Godhead cannot be divided, or else God... would cease to exist – an impossibility”,⁸⁶ Lewis ‘replies’ with reference to Barth and Eberhard Jüngel (1934-): “In that self-forsakenness by which the Father abandons and delivers up the Son, Godness itself is not abandoned, given *away* to the point of cessation, but maintained, revealed, perfected.”⁸⁷ Clearly, it is right to challenge an unimaginative tradition-bound denial of the possibility of certain divine actions or experiences if the Bible records that such actions and experiences occurred. Even where the Bible leaves such questions open, premature conclusiveness on the basis of theological assumptions is unwise.

However, these and similar authors offer their own theological importation at this point: a separation was vital to the dynamics of salvation. Reference is often made to Christ's suffering separation as a substitution, or representation, in which Christ's experience of abandonment mirrored in some way that deserved by humanity, and

⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.186; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, pp.214-216, cf. *Experiment Hope*, pp.73-75, 82; cf. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, pp.166, 168.

⁸⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161.

⁸⁷ Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.194.

was undergone to rescue humanity from such abandonment.⁸⁸ Those who hold such a view thus agree with Calvin's famous comment that "Nothing had been done if Christ had only endured corporeal death."⁸⁹ In fact, in this one aspect, at least, they agree, for all their vast difference in context, with Copeland, who scandalised McConnell by pronouncing to him in personal correspondence about Jesus' death that "when His blood poured out it did not atone."⁹⁰

It is not the purpose of this thesis to evaluate theories of the atonement. It is sufficient at this point to observe that JDS teaching is not alone in constructing a view of Christ's death in which the 'cry of dereliction' and 2 Corinthians 5:21 are both attended to.

4.4.4 Conclusion to §4.4

In conclusion to this section, JDS teaching emerges as consonant with a significant proportion of post-Reformation Christianity, both in its method of interpreting the 'cry of dereliction', its use of 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the conclusion thus reached, that Christ was separated from God. Insofar as JDS teaching offers an admittedly unsophisticated version of this belief, it can at least on this point be regarded as 'orthodox', rather than being the 'heresy' portrayed by some of its critics.

One obvious weakness in the method is that it is highly speculative. Much theological 'weight' is being placed on a very few texts, which themselves are brief

⁸⁸ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/1, pp.398-399; IV/1, p.230; 'The Humanity of God' [1956], ET Clifford Green (ed.), *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1991 [1989]), pp.46-66 (p.62); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Elucidations* ET John Riches (London: SPCK, 1975 [1971]), p.51; *Mysterium*, pp.12, 168-170, 181; Moltmann, *Experiment Hope*, pp.79-80 (cf. *Future of Creation*, p.62; Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.45 n.4, 90-91); Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, ch.5. While, for Barth, the separation expressed in the 'cry of dereliction' was sometimes identified with the hell of rejection Christ experienced as he bore human sin (e.g. *CD* II/2, p.365), at other times the cry was associated with a 'slighter' separation that was not in itself adequate to achieve atonement, for it was the separation experienced by individuals depicted in the Old Testament as they sank down in physical death into sheol (*CD* III/2, pp.589-592). This 'nothingness' was "comfortless but tolerable" (p.603). Christ's experience went 'beyond' this. God actively inflicted Christ with his just wrath: "Here the alienation from God becomes an annihilatingly painful existence in opposition to Him" (p.603). In rather similar fashion, Balthasar characterises the *separation* as the *presence* of God's oppressive punishment (*Glory* VII, p.209).

⁸⁹ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch.XVI. (ET Vol.I, p.443).

⁹⁰ Copeland, correspondence to McConnell, 1979, quoted in McConnell, *Promise*, p.120. Italics removed.

and relatively opaque. Secondly, these texts need to be brought together from disparate parts of the New Testament canon to form a conclusion that no text on its own demands, nor that the texts together demand. Thirdly, wider issues of alleged theological necessity are called into the equation. While conceding all these weaknesses, the belief that a separation occurred does not seem to be disprovable. Therefore, this chapter will continue on the justifiable basis that a separation *might* have happened. With this possibility in mind, JDS teaching's claim that it did occur can obviously be criticised for being unduly certain about that which is uncertain, and making implausibly 'plain' that which is shrouded in mystery.⁹¹ However, evaluation of this aspect of JDS teaching cannot end at that juncture. The criticisms reviewed in §4.3.2 included the issue of timing: did this postulated separation last until resurrection morning? This will be considered in §4.5. Further evaluation is also needed concerning what was allegedly involved in the separation, and will be considered in §4.6.

4.5 The timing of a possible separation

As stated in §4.2.4, JDS teachers believe that Jesus was separated from God the whole time that his body lay in the grave, as well as for the hours on the cross. For this, as indicated in §4.3.2, they have been criticised by those who observe that, according to Luke 23:43, 46, Jesus was confident that his fellowship with God after his physical death would be intact. This section will evaluate these reconstructions of events. However, it is difficult to defend the claim that the precise length of time for which Jesus was possibly separated from God – a number of hours or a number of days – is as important as other aspects of the discussion that have been raised in this chapter. So this section will be brief, and the detail limited.

As stated earlier, a key verse supporting JDS understanding is Acts 2:24. For Kenyon, an important matter concerning this verse is that 'pain' or 'pang' is more usefully understood as 'birth-pang'. To Kenyon, this indicates that what is in view is Jesus' 'spiritual (re)birth' from 'spiritual death', including separation from God, to

⁹¹ Brian Onken, 'The Atonement of Christ and the "Faith" Message', n.d., accessed 26.11.03 from www.equip.org [DP060.pdf], criticises the speculativeness of JDS teaching.

spiritual life.⁹² For Copeland, who also recognises the possibility that ‘pain’ can be rendered as ‘birth pang’, the logic is that, as this death is consciously experienced as pain, it cannot refer to physical death: “Jesus had already been delivered from the pain of physical death as soon as He left His body, three days before His resurrection.” Thus the death in view is the torment of ‘spiritual death’, including separation from God.⁹³

Acts 2:24 does not offer the support that Kenyon and Copeland find there. Whether ὠνιδας is understood as ‘pains’, ‘birth-pangs’, or even ‘cords’ (from the LXX translation of the Hebrew in Psalms 18:4, 5; 116:3), and λύσας as ‘loosed’ or ‘destroyed’, there is no need to see here any death distinguishable from Christ’s physical death. It was clearly Christ’s physical resurrection to which the apostolic preaching was attesting (e.g. Acts 2:32). The references to hades in Acts 2:27,⁹⁴ 31 also do not indicate separation from God. Luke first quoted and then paraphrased Psalm 16 (Acts 2:27, 31). These excerpts have been taken to mean that Jesus was in hell, which is mistakenly identified with hades, but was not left there forever (so KJV and JDS teaching). However, Luke meant that Jesus was not in hades in the first place, as is indicated by his use of εἰς rather than ἐν.⁹⁵

While they find support for their view especially in Acts 2:24, Kenyon and Copeland, who discuss these matters more fully than Hagin, recognise that other texts might suggest different conclusions to some interpreters. Thus they must offer alternative explanations for these texts, explanations that are sometimes more impressive for their ingenuity than for their plausibility.

Unsurprisingly, they believe that all the sayings on the cross recorded in the gospels are historical. In this respect, their understanding is in common with their evangelical critics. For the critics, the sayings recorded in Luke and John indicate clearly that

⁹² Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.59.

⁹³ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; cf. *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁹⁴ Cf. Hagin’s use of this verse: *Name*, pp.32-33.

⁹⁵ The argument that the precise wording is governed by the LXX, not by Luke, falls when it is observed that Luke both quoted and paraphrased the passage, and when Luke’s redactional freedom in quoting the LXX elsewhere is noted (e.g. cf. Acts 2:17-21 with LXX Joel 3:1-5).

whatever spiritual sufferings Jesus might have gone through on the cross were over before he physically died. He was thus able confidently to place his spirit in God's hands (Luke 23:46), knowing that he had completed his atoning work (John 19:30), and that he would later that same day be in paradise (Luke 23:43). That Christ was correct in his assessment that atonement was achieved was gloriously confirmed by the miraculous tearing of the temple curtain, letting forgiven humanity into the holy of holies without the shedding of animal blood (e.g. Luke 23:45).⁹⁶

The sayings alluded to above, along with their confirmation, require a different interpretation in the JDS schema. "It is finished" (John 19:30) is taken to mean not that Christ had finished his atoning work, but that he had finished his earthly work, and in so doing he had fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant, placing him in a position now to perform his atoning work.⁹⁷ Luke 23:43 is taken to read, "I tell you today: you will be with me in paradise."⁹⁸ While the Greek can stand such a translation, it is difficult to see why Luke's Jesus would wish to emphasise the timing of his statement, rather than the timing of its fulfilment.⁹⁹ "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46) is ignored. Finally, the tearing of the curtain is not understood in terms of letting humanity in, but in terms of letting God out: God has now deserted Old Covenant Judaism, with its animal sacrifices and physical temple, in favour of his New Covenant people, brought, through the sacrifice of his Son, into the spiritual temple of the church.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that some exegetical straining is required in order to reach the understanding set out in the preceding paragraph. It is more straightforward to conclude that for Luke and John at least, Christ's physical death marked a victorious moment of completion, and an end to Christ's sufferings. If Luke and John knew of

⁹⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.162, 166; Brandon, *Health*, p.124; McConnell, *Promise*, pp.128-129; Bowman, *Controversy*, p.167.

⁹⁷ Kenyon, *What Happened*, pp.47, 50; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3.

⁹⁸ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.60; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3; *Jesus In Hell*, pp.2-3.

⁹⁹ Discussion of strict chronology may be out of place here, anyway. The 'today' in view may be eschatological rather than chronological. See, e.g., John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), p.1152.

¹⁰⁰ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.42, ch.8. This is the most plausible of the exegeses presented in this paragraph. The tearing of the temple curtain is open to a large number of symbolic interpretations. See discussion of, e.g., the Lukan account in Nolland, *Luke*, p.1157; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), pp.1860-1861.

and accepted the tradition that Christ was separated from God, they surely presented it as completed now.

However, this aspect of JDS teaching receives indirect support from Barth and Moltmann, for whom the idea that Jesus the Son remained separate from God the Father whilst dead is implicit in their understanding of death (in turn informed by their monistic anthropology), which itself represents and incorporates abandonment by God. Precisely in his death he remained godforsaken, in appearance and in reality. Only his resurrection vindicated him. Balthasar was much more explicit in his tracing of Christ's godforsakenness beyond the cross and into the tomb. Thus, although their premises are markedly different from those of JDS teaching, their conclusion on this point at least is the same: Christ the Son is separate from God the Father for the whole time he is dead.

Balthasar in particular identified Christ's death during the *triduum mortis* with the Sheol of the Old Testament.¹⁰¹ There is, however, no direct biblical evidence to support this assertion. It seems just as reasonable to suggest that Christ's experience between his death and resurrection may prefigure, in his role as the "firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29), the intermediate state that his followers would in the future experience between their deaths and resurrections, a state that is with God rather than apart from him (e.g. Philippians 1:23). Thus Christ, in the passivity of death, was not continuing to suffer godforsakenness, but was accepted. This seems compatible with Luke 23:43, 46. To Barth, Luke 23:46 indicated that Jesus commended his spirit – himself – to God's "decree and disposing", which in this case was "to death."¹⁰² Balthasar glossed over the implications of these verses.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, ch.4. Both Barth and Balthasar agreed that sheol became or was replaced by hell through the Christ event (Barth, *CD III/2*, p.602; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, p.172)

¹⁰² Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.306; cf. *III/2*, p.364.

¹⁰³ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.109, 126. Balthasar did, however, accept the force of John 19:30 (*Mysterium*, p.150). Thus the work of redemption was essentially completed on the cross. Christ's time in Sheol was only an "efficacious outworking in the world beyond of what was accomplished in the temporality of history" (p.151), a "solidarity in whose absence the condition of standing for sinful man before God would not be complete" (p.161). Barth too noted John 19:30 as an indication that Christ's sacrifice was perfect (*CD IV/1*, p.281).

Moltmann effectively denies their historicity.¹⁰⁴ None of these authors seems to allow the texts' combined force to make the reasonable suggestion that at this point Christ's postulated separation from God was over.

In conclusion to this section, if Christ was separated from God, this seems to have lasted only while he hung on the cross – perhaps for the three hours of darkness referred to in the synoptics.

4.6 The nature of a possible separation

Quite apart from discussion about whether a separation between Jesus and God was even possible, and how long it might have lasted, further examination is in order concerning the nature of the separation that Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland conceive. In particular, its spatial imagery (§4.6.1), apparent contradictory nature (§4.6.2), and seemingly profound imbalance (§4.6.3) deserve consideration.

4.6.1 A spatial separation?

References in JDS teaching to spatial separation, while possibly meant metaphorically, at least appear to be intended 'literally' (see §4.2.2). As such, they appear inappropriately crude. Certainly, JDS teaching at this point exhibits commonalities with the Christianity of the first millennium, and its teaching about Christ's 'descent' into hell (see §§6.3; 6.4). However, earlier Christianity had the excuse that it inhabited a world that was *generally* thought to be flat, with a hell beneath it to be found if one dug deep enough, and a heaven in or beyond the sky. Expressions of North American Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have no such context, and therefore no such excuse.

Furthermore, JDS teachers seem to have given no thought to the implications that their references to a spatial separation have for their idea of the omnipresence of God. Also, these ideas form part of an implausible dualism (see §5.2.1) in which the

¹⁰⁴ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.147. That Luke deliberately omitted the 'cry of dereliction' from his account does not thereby entail that his record of Christ's sayings on the cross was invented, by him or by his intermediate sources.

universe seems divided into God's 'territory' and that of Satan, and in which Christ in his 'spiritual death' travelled from one territory to the other.

If a separation is to be articulated, it is surely more cogently expressed in terms which either maintain a clear relational view of the separation (often expressed by preference for the term 'abandonment' over 'separation'), or which are overtly metaphorical in their references to the spatial. The work of Moltmann is a useful example of the former, and Barth's references to the 'far country' a well-known example of the latter.¹⁰⁵

4.6.2 A contradictory understanding?

It emerged in §4.2.3 that JDS teaching offers an unsophisticated, vacillating account of precisely who was separated from whom in Christ's 'spiritual death'. Of particular concern is the contradiction evident in Kenyon's and Copeland's teaching that while on the one hand the being separated from God was 'the eternal Son', 'part' of God and his 'very inside', on the other hand the human being was separated from the divine, so that for Copeland the humanity of the victorious Christ in hell becomes of utmost importance as an example for victorious Christian living. That there is seeming contradiction in this account is not in itself problematic, for Christianity lives with paradox from beginning to end, and especially in any incarnational view of Christ's death.¹⁰⁶ What is of concern is that the relationship between the ideas remains entirely unexplored. This is understandable in terms of JDS teachers' backgrounds, audiences, and intentions, but it renders JDS teaching highly vulnerable to criticism of even a moderately sophisticated theological hue.

A survey of expositions of a separation on the cross reveals the considerable difficulties that occur when an attempt is made to 'iron out' the seeming contradiction by firmly locating the separation either between the divine and the human on the one hand or between the first and second persons of the Godhead on

¹⁰⁵ Moltmann writes repeatedly of Christ's 'godforsakenness'. For Barth's references to the 'far country' see, e.g., *CD IV/I*, pp.157, 177, 192, 280, 283.

¹⁰⁶ For discussion of paradox in incarnational theology, see D. M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ* (London: Faber, 1961 [1956]), ch.V.

the other. Examples of the former abound. In the first Christian millennium, the concern was to preserve the immutability and impassibility of God; in the second, a common tendency has been to highlight the wrath of God expressed against a Christ who was carrying the world's sin. Examples of the latter occur in more recent theology, especially in the work of Moltmann.

For those early church commentators who recognised a separation, it definitely occurred between the human, dying Christ and the non-suffering, non-changing God. Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428), while admitting that God was crucified in a sense,¹⁰⁷ yet wrote, "The Godhead was separated from the one who was suffering in the trial of death, because it was impossible for him to taste the trial of death if [the Godhead] were not cautiously remote from him."¹⁰⁸ Nestorius (c.386-c.451), whose Antiochene Christology was controversially and infamously pronounced, took a similar view.¹⁰⁹ Alexandrian 'Word-flesh' Christology might have been expected to maintain a greater unity in the person of the crucified Christ. Yet this was not the case. Nestorius' antagonist Cyril (c.378-c.444) placed all of Christ's suffering in his 'flesh', only conceding that this was 'appropriated' by the deity "for the sake of our salvation."¹¹⁰ Thus, according to Moltmann, when Cyril discussed the 'cry of dereliction', he could not see any intra-trinitarian dimension to it.¹¹¹

Moltmann offers strong arguments against this early position that understood the rupture solely as a divine-human one in order to remove God from suffering. He wisely observes that the very premise of this position – the impassibility of God – is false. It is entirely true to say that God cannot suffer because of some "deficiency in his being." This does not prevent him, however, from suffering out of the plenitude of his character, and, in particular, his love.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Incarnation* XII:11, ET Richard A. Norris, Jr., *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p.122.

¹⁰⁸ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies* 8:9, ET A. Mingana (quoted in Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.160, n.53).

¹⁰⁹ Nestorius, *First Sermon Against the Theotokos*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.128-129; cf. *Second Letter to Cyril*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.135-140, e.g. "'This is,' not my deity, but 'my body which is broken for you'" (p.138).

¹¹⁰ Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to John of Antioch*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.140-145 (p.144).

¹¹¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.229.

¹¹² Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.230; cf. Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, pp.198-199.

Calvin's work is a clear example of the later separation between divine and human as an expression of divine wrath against the sin Christ carried. Thus he wrote that while Christ felt abandoned, he "bore the weight of the divine anger." He stood "at the bar of God as a criminal in our stead." Throughout the crucifixion, "the divine power of the Spirit veiled itself for a moment, that it might give place to the infirmity of the flesh."¹¹³ This depiction is open to the criticism that articulations of a separation between God and Christ all too easily suggest the idea that the purpose and action of Father and Son on the cross were in some way at odds with each other (see further, §4.6.3).

Moltmann's attempts to relocate the separation within the Trinity¹¹⁴ are not dissimilar to the view of Balthasar, who independently of Moltmann also highlighted the intra-trinitarian aspect of the separation, though without denying a divine-human aspect to it.¹¹⁵ Of the two positions, the former has received more criticism. Criticism common to both is the charge that they involve a trinitarianism that tends towards tritheism. Jowers makes the criticism of Moltmann, offering a considerable bibliography of similar criticisms.¹¹⁶ Lauber offers the criticism, cautiously, of Balthasar.¹¹⁷ Wider criticism of Moltmann includes some which merely rehearses the traditional refusal of divine passibility that Moltmann, and others before him such as Barth, have successfully countered.¹¹⁸ More incisive criticism includes that which is concerned by Moltmann's absolute identifying of the immanent trinity with the economic one.¹¹⁹ As Balthasar himself wrote, "the process of establishing and

¹¹³ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch.XVI (ET, Vol.I, pp.444, 446); cf. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.167.

¹¹⁴ E.g. Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.207. However, Moltmann may not be entirely denying a divine-human aspect to the schism, as his use of the word 'simply' demonstrates: "In the cross of Christ, a rupture tears, as it were, through God himself. It does not simply tear through Christ, as the doctrine of the two natures states" (*Experiment Hope*, p.80). Lewis, notwithstanding, takes Moltmann to deny a divine-human rupture (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.225).

¹¹⁵ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.52, 79, 81, 109.

¹¹⁶ Jowers, 'Theology', p.26 and n.87. Richard Bauckham also refers to these criticisms, but does not accept them (*The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995], p.25).

¹¹⁷ David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp.60-61.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Jowers, 'Theology'.

¹¹⁹ E.g. Moltmann, *Future of Creation*, p.76; *Crucified God*, p.240.

experiencing the world” must remain for God “a perfectly free decision.”¹²⁰ Balthasar overcame the problem, and preserved God’s immutability, like Barth before him, by positing an eternal kenosis which was then fully expressed in the acts of incarnation and atonement.¹²¹ In it, the primal kenosis is that of the Father, who from eternity has been giving away himself and his divinity into his Son (and the Spirit).¹²² This is expressed in the atonement, as the Father gives away, or abandons, the Son into death: Balthasar wrote that the primal kenosis implied “such an incomprehensible and unique ‘separation’ of God from himself that it *includes* and grounds every other separation – be it never so dark and bitter.”¹²³

Beyond these criticisms of Moltmann and Balthasar, it must be observed that a suggestion which posits a separation only between the divine persons would place this suffering outside the realm of human representation, and render the apparent human suffering of Christ, beyond the physical tortures, docetic (Jesus in his humanity only *seemed* to go through the spiritual suffering of abandonment; the suffering *actually* occurred only in the trinity).

In conclusion to this section about the apparently contradictory account of the separation offered in JDS teaching, in which it is sometimes the human Christ who is separated from undifferentiated God, and sometimes the divine Son who is separated from the Father, it becomes clear that attempted simplifications in which one aspect of separation is emphasised and the other denied or at least minimised do not overcome the difficulties encountered, but merely compound them.

It is thus tempting to agree with those who assert that a separation of any form on the cross was impossible, and therefore simply did not occur. However, to ‘solve the mystery’ in this way is not the only possible or plausible way to proceed. If Christ was God incarnate, then his death alone is deeply problematic to human logic, and its

¹²⁰ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, p.35; cf. Lauber, *Barth*, p.142. Lewis, however, offers a defence of Moltmann’s exposition of the economic and immanent trinity, claiming that Moltmann still retains “their notional distinction” (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.228).

¹²¹ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.35, 79-82.

¹²² Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.viii, 27-36.

¹²³ Balthasar, quoted by Aidan Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth: A Guide Through Balthasar’s Dramatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p.165, italics in quotation.

‘inner workings’ must be seen as shrouded in mystery.¹²⁴ To accept that a separation, if it occurred, was also deeply mysterious does not demand that it should be rejected. Another possible way forward is to maintain the idea of a separation, but suggest a paradoxical combination of intra-trinitarian and divine-human aspects.

Perhaps Barth offered the most sensitive and sustained balance between these aspects of the separation.¹²⁵ Sometimes the humanity of the separated one is emphasised (while not denying the divinity):

It was to fulfil this judgment on sin that the Son of God as man took our place as sinners. He fulfils it – as man in our place – by completing our work in the omnipotence of the divine Son, by treading the way of sinners to its bitter end in death, in destruction, in the limitless anguish of separation from God.¹²⁶

Sometimes the divinity is emphasised:

We may think of the darkness which we are told later came down at the hour of Jesus’ death (Mk. 15:33), the rending of the veil of the temple (Mk. 15:37), the earthquake which shook the rocks and opened the graves (Mt. 27:51), as though – in anticipation of its own end – the cosmos had to register the strangeness of this event: the transformation of the accuser into the accused and the judge into the judged, the naming and handling of the Holy God as one who is godless.¹²⁷

In conclusion, given the obvious difficulties created by placing a separation only between the divine and human or only between the persons of the Trinity, it seems wise to follow Barth, and effectively agree with Kenyon and Copeland, by placing a posited separation *both* between the divine and the human *and* within the Trinity. The apparent difficulty with such a suggestion – that it combines two essentially contradictory notions – is lessened when inspected in the light of the incarnation. The separation of the Father from the Son *is* the separation of the divine from the human *precisely because* the Son and *not* the Father has become a human (while not ceasing to be God).¹²⁸ God the Father (the fount of the Godhead) is separated from God the

¹²⁴ Charles Wesley was right: “‘Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!” (David & Jill Wright, *30 Hymns of the Wesleys* [Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1985], p.14).

¹²⁵ Barth is read in bewilderingly different ways by his expositors. For Lauber, Barth “refrain[s] from attributing suffering directly to God, in contrast to Moltmann” (*Barth*, pp.142-143). For Lewis, Barth “learned dramatically to rethink the very doctrine of God in the light of Jesus’ death and burial. Here the already tottering edifice of immutability collapsed, terminally shaken by the revealed actuality of God’s Christomorphic passion” (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.197). Lewis’ exegesis seems more accurate (see, e.g., Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.245).

¹²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.253.

¹²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.239.

¹²⁸ Essentially this explanation is offered by Bruce L. McCormack, with copious references to Barth (‘The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth’s Doctrine of the Atonement’, pp.346-366 in Charles E.

Human (the Son), whose divinity, though real, is kenotic (in Balthasar's sense). The potential counter-argument that the human Jesus was not *really*, then, abandoned by God, for he was still 'with' God the Son (in his abandonment by God the Father) falls, for it mistakes the two natures of Christ as two persons, who can succour each other, and it fails to recognise the utter abandonment by the Father that the Son was 'also' suffering.

4.6.3 An unbalanced presentation?

Virtually no consideration is given in JDS doctrine to ways in which, in this postulated separation, Christ and God were, paradoxically, supremely united. Interest in 2 Corinthians 5:21, for example, is not 'balanced' by interest in 2 Corinthians 5:19. That the cross was voluntarily accepted by Christ (see §4.2.4) is the nearest these teachers come to recognising that, in the midst of the separation, a deep divine unity was being expressed. Even this is given little prominence by Kenyon especially, who wrote extensively of what God did to Jesus in the crucifixion, and remarkably little of what Jesus himself did. While Hagin and Copeland are somewhat more balanced on this point, ascribing salvific activity to Christ, they do not draw out any implications from this for the relationship between Father and Son, or God and Jesus, in the crucifixion.

The New Testament sees otherwise. While the cross was in various ways portrayed as the action of God (John 3:16; Acts 2:23; Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21, etc.), it was also seen as the action of Christ (Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 10:17; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:24, etc.). In fact, in many ways it was seen as the united action of the two. From beginning to end, Christ set out to do the will of his Father. The cross was no exception. This is perhaps most explicit in John (5:36; 10:37-38; 17:4, and note especially 10:18), but it was believed by Paul (e.g. Romans 5:8; Galatians 1:4; Philippians 2:8) and in Hebrews (9:14). In the synoptics, the unity of will that led to the cross was highlighted by the Gethsemane prayer (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). This prayer could be seen as a division of will, and suggest some hesitancy in Christ beforehand and thereafter, as well as at the time. However, there

Hill & Frank A. James III, *The Glory of the Atonement* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], and especially p.364).

are in effect three wills evident in the prayer. There is the will of the Father, the will Jesus expressed as ‘his’ but rejected, and that third will that Christ expressed in forming his prayer: his will to do, and thus absolutely conform to, the Father’s will. The outcome of the prayer can be regarded as governing Christ’s attitude to all that followed, however appalling.

If the ‘cry of dereliction’ allows a belief that on the cross Christ the Son was separated from God the Father, then the biblical testimonies to the unity of the Father and the Son in approaching the cross allow just as firmly, if they do not in fact demand, the belief that Jesus and his Father were as close as they had ever been. *In extremis*, God and Christ remained utterly *at one* in their determination to accept the deadly consequences of human sinfulness. If Christ was in some sense separated from God on the cross, he was at that moment united with God in his resolve to endure the agony of it. It might even be appropriate to claim that at this point, Christ was *most* united with God, if what is meant is that now Christ’s resolve to conform to his Father’s will and purpose was tested to the uttermost, and therefore now most profoundly expressed, through surviving the test. This can only be expressed in paradox. Mysteriously, it is actually in this separation that the two separated partners are most radically united, for they are united in their love for the humanity which this separation seeks to save, they are united in their determination to accept the pain that the salvation demands, and they are united in their readiness to be separated.

In keeping with this biblical depiction, some of those who believe in a separation offer a much more impressive exposition of it than the JDS version, in that they retain a focus on the nearness of Christ and God in the midst of separation. This insight is retained by biblical commentators,¹²⁹ evangelical expositors,¹³⁰ and systematic theologians.¹³¹

¹²⁹ E.g. Cranfield, *Mark*, p.459.

¹³⁰ E.g. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, p.82.

¹³¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, p.252; Balthasar, *Elucidations*, p.51.

4.7 Chapter conclusions

4.7.1 Summary

In brief, JDS teachers believe that one defining aspect of Jesus' 'spiritual death' was his separation from God. They believe that this separation, which lasted until immediately before Christ's physical resurrection, was relational but also apparently spatial, and occurred because God was justly rejecting the sin that Christ on the cross had become. It could be expressed in terms of a separation both between God and the human Jesus, and between the divine Father and Son. The belief rests upon their understanding of the 'cry of dereliction' and certain other texts brought alongside it, especially 2 Corinthians 5:21. Kenyon's adoption of this belief was not from New Thought or Christian Science. Rather, the same view was found, though rarely, in Faith Cure. For this view, JDS teaching has been criticised. According to the various critics, such a separation is either flatly impossible, or if possible is exaggerated in the JDS depiction, in terms of timing or extent.

Despite these criticisms, a survey of interpretation of the 'cry of dereliction' throughout Christian history reveals that, while there has been a great variety of ideas, belief in a separation has not been absent, and when it has occurred, it has formed an important part of articulations of the atonement. Exegesis of the canonised passages where the cry is recorded indicates that the interpretation which sees some sort of separation occurring is not necessary, but neither is it ruled out. A broader view of the New Testament does not alter this verdict. The JDS version of events is therefore not necessarily untrue to the New Testament, though it presents as plain and clear and which is rarely attested and whose attestation is, anyway, ambiguous.

Proceeding on the basis that this postulated separation might have occurred, various further observations can be presented about the JDS understanding of it. First, in regard to timing, there is more reason offered in the New Testament to regard a separation as having ceased by the time Christ physically died, than to trace it through to the time of his resurrection. In mitigation, it must be observed that JDS teachers are far from alone in adhering to the latter view. Secondly, concerning the idea of a spatial separation, JDS teaching, if it is to be taken 'literally' at this point, is

not justified. Thirdly, JDS teaching makes no effort to face the obvious dilemma that postulation of a separation creates within the context of trinitarian and incarnational belief: who was separated from whom? Again in mitigation, it may be that JDS teachers have ‘chanced upon’ an acceptable account, in which a separation between the divine and the human is held in paradoxical tension with a separation between two divine persons. Fourthly, and most importantly, there is a lack of recognition that, in this possible separation, Christ and the Father were also, paradoxically, most intimately united. This recognition is fundamental to atonement doctrine, and indeed to trinitarianism. It exhibits in the economy the eternal, utterly united, *love* for humanity of two persons of the one God.

4.7.2 Implications

The one most important criticism of the JDS rendition of Christ’s possible separation from God, then, is not that the Bible denies such a separation, or that JDS teachers ‘got the timing wrong’, or that they are crassly spatial in their imagery, or that they are unclear or inconsistent about who was separated from whom, but that this teaching, while siding with many other Christians in claiming that a separation occurred, joins unknowingly with some of these others in failing to hold in close proximity an appalling separation *and* an extraordinary unity, whether this is expressed as existing between Father and Son or between God and Jesus. This failure has important implications for trinitarianism, incarnation, and atonement. As already stated (see §2.2), it is not possible within the confines of this thesis to consider in detail JDS teaching’s trinitarianism, incarnationalism, or account of the atonement, still less to offer relevant theories in their place. Nevertheless, some observations are pertinent.

As far as the Trinity is concerned, if Moltmann and Balthasar can be accused of tritheism, when they express both a separation between and a unity of Father and Son, how much more can this accusation be directed at a depiction of separation that includes no such counterweight. If Jesus remains the divine Son while simply separated from God the Father, this seems deeply problematic for an articulation of the everlasting unity of God. It is possible that Balthasar’s account of an eternal

kenosis might ‘come to the rescue’ at this point, but it must immediately be conceded that Balthasar’s idea is highly speculative. Of course, it cannot be claimed that simply ‘balancing’ separation, paradoxically, with unity overcomes these perplexing trinitarian questions. It does, however, at least offer a possible way towards articulating the maintenance of divine unity in the midst of separation.

Turning now to the matter of incarnation, the JDS portrayal is perhaps a consequence, and certainly a confirmation of, the somewhat Apollinarian and/or adoptionistic Christology, coupled with a marked functional kenoticism, expressed within JDS teaching (see §1.4.4). These attributes of JDS incarnationalism, though difficult to reconcile, combine to form a Christology in which the divine and the human in Christ are less firmly coinherent than in traditional forms of the hypostatic union. If God can inhabit a human body, or choose to ‘come into’ a human, then God can also all too easily depart from this body or person. Fully incarnational Christology at this point seems somewhat compromised. This compromise is relieved if the complete unity of God and Christ on the cross is emphasised. It must be conceded, again, that positing the unity of God and Christ on the cross as a counterweight, rather than an alternative, to a postulated separation does not in one stroke remove the difficulty for incarnational Christology. However, it must be repeated that some difficulty already exists for incarnation in declaring that Christ was born, grew, hungered, thirsted, tired, suffered, and died (how can God do these things, such as die? ¹³²). To suggest that Christ was separated from God is in effect part of the same awkward question.

With respect to the atonement, a failure to hold a separation in paradoxical combination with unity drifts all too easily into the impression of a divided atoning purpose or action between the persons of the Godhead. Vincent Taylor was right to criticise any “division within the Godhead” in which “the compassionate Son is set

¹³² References in Christian theology to the ‘death of God’ have been consistently, and perhaps necessarily, paradoxical, from Tertullian’s (145-?220) statement that “God has died, and yet is alive for ever and ever” (*Against Marcion* II.XVI) to Jüngel’s writing “Vom Tod des lebendigen Gottes” (*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 65 [1968], pp.93-116). Both references from Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.240, nn.124, 126.

over against the just and holy Father.”¹³³ In the JDS presentation, the misconstrual would be more likely to be that a loving God is sacrificing a passive Jesus. Such a division of purpose or action is not explicit among JDS teachers, but their writing could be understood this way by someone predisposed to do so.

One final observation is necessary at this point: JDS teaching is by no means unique in articulating a separation on the cross that is not held in paradoxical tension with an expression of complete divine unity, and is therefore not alone in being vulnerable to the criticisms voiced in this section. Given the extent within Christianity to which these views are held, this aspect of JDS teaching, at least, can hardly be labelled as ‘heretical’. Rather, it is a relatively unsophisticated version of a nexus of beliefs widely held for many generations within fully ‘orthodox’ circles.

4.7.3 Key observations

JDS teaching’s claim that the crucified Jesus was separated from God cannot be regarded as contradicting the witness of either the Christian scriptures or the later church, at least as represented by some of their voices. As such, it cannot be validly denounced as ‘heretical’. In particular, among Kenyon’s contemporary sources, this view was held by the prominent ‘orthodox’ proponent of Faith Cure, A. J. Gordon.

In turn, any criticisms of this aspect of JDS doctrine must be directed not only at it, but also at other expressions of the same idea. Of these criticisms, the one that carries greatest force is the observation that JDS teaching fails, in its postulation of a separation between God and the crucified Christ, to highlight a simultaneous, and vitally important, unity between the two. This failure compromises the trinitarianism, incarnationalism and atonement theology of JDS doctrine, as it does of any presentation of Christ’s death that similarly fails to marry a separation or abandonment with a concomitant intimate unity.

¹³³ Vincent Taylor, *The Cross of Christ* (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1956), p.91. Taylor continued, “The true presupposition of the doctrine of the Atonement is the fact that God is love and that in the work of reconciliation Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are at one.” McLeod Campbell’s arguments against Scottish Calvinism on this point, and for divine unity in the atonement, have already been noted (§4.4.1).

4 Jesus' 'spiritual death' as separation from God

4.1 Introduction

Hagin and Copeland, following the lead of Kenyon, incorporate three primary concepts into their declaration that Jesus 'died spiritually' (see §§1.4.5-1.4.7). These three beliefs are that in his 'spiritual death', Jesus was separated from God, partook of Satan's nature, and became Satan's prey. The first of these concepts is the one in which the greatest degree of agreement among them is evident, and it forms the focus of the present chapter, whose purpose will be to offer an analysis and evaluation of the belief, as part of this thesis' overall appraisal of JDS doctrine. As an introduction to the evaluative sections, existing criticisms of the JDS belief in Christ's separation will also be elucidated.

In §4.2, the JDS articulation of Jesus' separation from God will be set out. Thereafter, §4.3 will review criticisms of this claim offered by participants in the debate introduced in §§1.5-1.8. In the light of these criticisms, §§4.4 and 4.5 will consider the possibility that a separation occurred (§4.4); and the timing of this possible separation (§4.5). Finally, §4.6 will consider further aspects of the JDS presentation, to do with the nature of the postulated separation, before §4.7 concludes the chapter.

4.2 The JDS articulation of Jesus' separation from God

In JDS teaching, the idea that Jesus was separated from God is consistently linked with his becoming sin.¹ Although the chapter divisions of this thesis create a distance between this separation and the other two elements in JDS teaching, it is important to remember that Jesus' separation from God is in fact seen in continuity with his participating in a sinful, satanic nature (see §§5.2-5.3), and becoming Satan's prey (see §6.2). Thus, imbued with 'sin' and characterised in some way as 'satanic', Jesus was now in a vastly different state from the holy Son who knew the intimate fellowship of God. The implication is that God in his holiness and justice was unable or unwilling to commune with Jesus while the latter was in this state. The 'separation' (a favourite word for this phenomenon in JDS teaching) was thus a

¹ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.126, 135-136; Hagin, *Name*, p.32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-4.

breakdown of relations. Other descriptive terms illustrate this: “turns His back”; “shut out”; “outcast”;² “estranged”;³ “severed”; the opposite of “intimate companionship”.⁴ Clearly, the presentation is of a breakdown and failure of intimacy, a sense of hostility and distance, and presumably of disapproval.

The following subsections analyse five aspects of Kenyon’s, Hagin’s and Copeland’s teaching about the separation on the cross: how long the separation lasted (§4.2.1); whether the relational separation is also to be understood as spatial (§4.2.2); between whom the separation occurred (§4.2.3); and at whose behest the separation occurred (§4.2.4). Thereafter, consideration is given to the sources of these beliefs (§4.2.5).

4.2.1 The timing of the separation

In some varieties of JDS teaching, Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ is traced from Gethsemane.⁵ However, Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland all see its inception while Jesus was on the cross. Kenyon believed that Jesus ‘died spiritually’ and was separated from God after hanging on the cross for three hours.⁶ Hagin and Copeland are not so specific.

All three believe that Jesus was separated from God for three days.⁷ The belief is that while Jesus hung on the cross and lay in the grave, the ‘spiritual death’ that he suffered occurred both while he was physically alive and physically dead. His reunion with God, which marked his ‘spiritual resurrection’, occurred immediately before his physical resurrection. As his ‘spiritual death’ was the cause of his physical death, so too his ‘spiritual resurrection’ (or rebirth) was the immediate cause of his physical resurrection.

² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.126, 135, 136.

³ Hagin, *Name*, p.29.

⁴ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; ‘Worthy’, p.6.

⁵ E.g. F. K. C. Price, quoted in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.157. Kenyon denied this (*Father*, p.136).

⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, p.135.

⁷ Kenyon, *What Happened*, ch.IX; Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.8; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.3-6. Hagin was less consistent than Kenyon and Copeland: see his *Zoe*, p.45.

4.2.2 The nature of the separation

Separation between persons can be viewed either relationally or spatially. As already stated, the separation of the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ from God is clearly relational for all three authors. However, the very word ‘separation’, as opposed for instance to ‘abandonment’, ‘desertion’, or ‘forsakenness’, might be taken to carry spatial connotations. Kenyon wrote in apparently mixed terms:

He has taken Man’s place, and the whole human race is now represented in Him, and as He hangs there under judgement on the accursed tree, God takes your sin and mine, yes, the sin of the whole world and lets it fall upon the sensitive spirit until the sin of a world has entered into His very Being and He has become the outcast from Heaven, until God turns His back upon Him, and He cries out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me. [*sic*]”⁸

The idea of God ‘turning His back’ implies a relational concept. However, the phrase ‘outcast from heaven’ might indicate spatial thinking, if Kenyon thought of heaven in spatial terms. That he did so is suggested by his writing about hell, which would appear to be an equivalent opposite in Kenyon’s mind. He wrote of Christ’s ‘sinking’: “Holy, as God was Holy, pure, as God was pure, yet for you and for me that precious Being sank to the lowest depths of Hell.”⁹ So, although Kenyon thought in relational terms, he also wrote in spatial ones.

Hagin’s prioritisation of relational language is perhaps clearer. Having declared of Christ that “He became like we were, separated from God”, Hagin signified what ‘our’ separation is: “When we talk about a sinner’s spirit being in spiritual death, we do not mean his spirit does not exist... the sinner’s spirit is not in fellowship, and not in relationship with God.” Unsurprisingly, Hagin related this to Adam’s fall. It is revealing that Hagin did not time Adam’s ‘spiritual death’ from his (at least metaphorically) spatial expulsion from Eden’s garden (Genesis 3:23), but from his more relational hiding *within* the garden (Genesis 3:8-10).¹⁰ However, like Kenyon, Hagin could write of Christ going “down into the prison house of suffering.”¹¹

⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.126.

⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.130; cf. p.119: “The Holy, innocent Son of God [went] into Hell’s dark recesses as our sin Substitute.”

¹⁰ Hagin, *Name*, pp.29-31, quotations from pp.29, 30; cf. *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.60.

¹¹ Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7.

Copeland follows Hagin in seeing Adam's 'spiritual death' as occurring while Adam was still in Eden, as indicated for Copeland by Adam's fear (Genesis 3:10),¹² rather than on Adam's expulsion from the garden. This suggests that spatial separation is not foremost in Copeland's mind. He also defines Adam's 'spiritual death' as 'being separated from the life and glory of God'.¹³ Similarly, he writes of Christ's death: "On the cross, Jesus was separated from the glory of God."¹⁴ Copeland defines God's glory as His goodness.¹⁵ This might imply that separation from it is experienced relationally, insofar as goodness possibly suggests kindness. However, the picture is not clear-cut. Copeland refers frequently to Christ's 'going to hell', and certainly describes hell in spatial terms.¹⁶ Thus, although his presentation of God's voice and power being active in hell to restore His Son is relational, it is reasonable to conclude that, for Copeland, Christ's separation from God was spatial as well as relational.

In conclusion to this subsection, although all three authors characterise the separation that occurred on the cross as a relational one, they all also write in spatial terms. It is unclear how much degree of metaphor is being employed in these spatial references. Given their habit of reading the Bible in ways that they would label as 'literal' (see §2.2.3), it seems likely that JDS teachers intend to be taken 'literally' themselves. Jesus was 'sent away from' God and 'travelled down' to hell.

4.2.3 The separated beings

The idea that Jesus was separated from God can be understood, in terms of the beings involved, in three primary ways. First, it can be taken to indicate that the human Jesus was separated from undifferentiated God. Secondly, in trinitarian terms, it can be understood as a statement that the Son was separated from the Father. Thirdly, the concept can be taken to represent both the first two ideas, albeit perhaps paradoxically. Neither Kenyon, Hagin nor Copeland deliberately clarifies which of these three he favours. It seems highly likely, in view of their lack of formal theological education and sophistication (see §§1.3.1-1.3.3; 2.4.2), that none of them

¹² Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14.

¹³ Copeland, *Force of Faith*, p.14; 'To Know the Glory', p.6.

¹⁴ Copeland, 'To Know the Glory', p.6.

¹⁵ Copeland, 'To Know the Glory', p.5.

¹⁶ Copeland, e.g. *Covenant*, p.39; 'Gates', pp.5, 6.

has considered these possibilities or their implications.¹⁷ However, the language that each uses offers clues as to his assumptions.

Kenyon employed a variety of phrases that suggested both divine-human and intra-trinitarian rupture. Representing the former, he could simply write that Jesus on the cross was “an outcast from God.”¹⁸ Representing the latter, he wrote a few pages earlier that the one who went to hell “under judgment”, “forsaken by the Father”, was “the Eternal Son.”¹⁹ However, he did not discuss these ideas further, in order for instance to explore the apparent contradiction between the two ideas, or wider Christological questions that his statements prompted.

Hagin did not describe the separation in sufficient detail to allow a clear picture to emerge. The only clue lies in his use of the term ‘spirit’, which, given his consistent anthropological use of the word, might suggest that he thought predominantly in terms of the human Jesus being separated from the Godhead. He wrote: “Jesus became sin. His *spirit* was separated from God.”²⁰

Copeland, like Kenyon, makes statements that support both a divine-human separation and an intra-trinitarian one. The former is suggested by his reference to the ‘anointing’ in: “Jesus was separated from the presence of God. He was cut off from the Anointing.” However, this statement is immediately followed by, “He’d known the life and intimate companionship of God within His spirit for all eternity.”²¹ His reference to eternity here indicates, unless he believes that Christ’s humanity is from eternity, that the divine Son was separated from the Father. The fact that this eternal companionship was known in Christ’s ‘spirit’, which term seems to be anthropological in Copeland’s use, probably merely indicates the lack of precision in Copeland’s Christological exposition. In particularly unsophisticated language, Copeland also recognises in his preaching that intra-trinitarian dynamics were at work on the cross: “There’s not any further that God can go because that is

¹⁷ Lie stresses his belief that Kenyon did not (personal correspondence, 6.1.06).

¹⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.136; cf. pp.126, 127; *Presence*, p.205; *What Happened*, p.45.

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.130; cf. p.129, 135; *What Happened*, pp.42, 44.

²⁰ Hagin, *Name*, p.32, italics added; cf. pp.29-30.

²¹ Copeland, ‘Worthy’, p.6.

part of Himself hanging on that cross. And the very inside of God hanging on that cross is severed from Him...”²² However, in this sermon Copeland’s focus quickly moves on to the separation of the human Jesus from undifferentiated God: “... and in that moment of severing, the spirit of Jesus accepting that sin and making it to be sin, He’s separated from God and in that moment He’s mortal man, capable of failure, capable of death.”²³ Like Kenyon, Copeland makes no mention of the possible paradox or even contradiction involved in these statements. As in the case of Kenyon, the impression is created that Copeland has not thought the issues through.

Of these three authors, Copeland is the one who makes the most hortatory use of his understanding of the separation. The humanity, in distinction to the deity, of Christ in his ‘spiritual death’ and ‘rebirth’ is highly significant to Copeland, who regards Jesus, called in the New Testament the ‘Firstborn’ (Romans 8:29, etc.), as “the first born again man – the first man to ever be lifted from death unto life... from spiritual death.”²⁴ The practical inference is clear: born-again Christians today enjoy precisely the heritage of the born-again Christ. In this respect, Copeland appeals to a message he claims to have received from the Holy Spirit: “Don’t you realize that a reborn Man whipped Satan hands down in his own territory... And I’ll say this: any reborn man that knew as much of the Word of God as He did could do the same thing.”²⁵ Victorious Christian living therefore depends upon Jesus’ (regenerate) *human* victory over Satan. That this view contradicts his preaching cited in the previous paragraph, that ‘part’ of God is crucified and his ‘very inside’ is severed from him, rather than the human from the divine, does not gain his attention. It will, however, gain the attention of §4.6.2.²⁶

²² Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

²³ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

²⁴ Kenneth Copeland, *What Satan Saw on the Day of Pentecost*, audio tape 02-0022 (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, n.d.), side 1.

²⁵ Copeland, *What Satan Saw*, side 1; cf. *What Happened*, side 2.

²⁶ It will emerge in §§5.3-5.4 that uncertainty exists concerning Christ’s continuing divinity in his ‘spiritual death’. Clearly, this uncertainty coheres only with an emphasis on a human Jesus being separated from undifferentiated God.

4.2.4 The initiative behind the separation

Arguably, there is a difference between a situation in which Jesus *feels* separated from a God who is actually nearby, for instance because Jesus' outward circumstances are appalling, and one in which God has actually distanced himself from Jesus, or shown real hostility to him. In other words, there is a difference between a separation only felt internally by Jesus, and one that was actually initiated by the hostility of the one from whom he feels separated. It is clear from the general tenor of their writings that JDS teachers believe that Christ's separation from God was in this sense actual: to believe in a merely apparent separation robs the doctrine of substitutionary atonement of its internal logic, in their view, and falls short of reflecting the biblical witness. Thus Jesus felt separated from God precisely because God actively shunned him. This is clearest in Kenyon's exposition, but implicit in Hagin's and Copeland's.²⁷

Relational separation between God and the human Jesus, or even between the Father and the Son, is in JDS thinking a separation between two unequal partners, in which relationship the presence of God is far more important to Jesus (the difference, in fact, between 'spiritual life' and 'spiritual death') than the other way round. Also, Jesus is dependent, and God is in control. Much JDS testimony centres on God's action, of which Christ seems merely the suffering object. Kenyon especially wrote at length in these terms, for instance writing graphically of "God taking our sin nature, hideous spiritual death, and making it strike, as the Prophet says, upon His [Christ's] soul."²⁸ Nevertheless, this is not the only element in their portrayal. All three make it clear that Jesus was actively involved in giving his own life and accepting his own 'spiritual death'.²⁹ Thus while their message is clear that Jesus experienced separation from God because God rejected him, rather than the other way round, this rejection was, with reasonable consistency, because of Christ's own

²⁷ This is despite, in Hagin's case, the analogical separation of the first Adam occurring through Adam's action (hiding), rather than God's action (expelling).

²⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.125-127, 135-138, quotation from p.125; cf. *What Happened*, pp.43-47.

²⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.136; Hagin, *Redeemed*, p.64; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, pp.7, 13, 15. However, on this point Kenyon vacillated. He also wrote, "You see, on the cross He died spiritually, a partaker of sin – not of His own volition. God laid upon His spirit our sin" (*Advanced Bible Course*, p.282, quoted in Lie, 'Theology', p.101).

voluntary acceptance of the ‘sin nature’ which God, in his justice, must reject.³⁰ This is the closest that JDS teaching comes to portraying any sort of paradoxical unity-in-separation between Christ and God. There is not a strong exposition of the complete marriage of resolute paternal and filial will and purpose expressed, for instance, as the outcome of the Gethsemane prayers. This failure will receive further attention later, in §4.6.3.

4.2.5 Sources for the doctrine

These authors of course believe that their ideas are taught in the Bible, which is the sole source they explicitly cite. They believe that it is directly stated with reference to Jesus himself, and is also entailed in their understanding of his substitutionary experience, in which he went through the ‘spiritual death’ that Adam had brought on himself and on the rest of humanity in the fall. Thus the biblical basis commences with material in Genesis that indicates to them that Adam and Eve, as a consequence of their sin, experienced ‘spiritual death’ that involved separation from God, and led in time to physical death (Genesis 2:17 [cf. §3.2.1]; 3:8-10, 19, 23).³¹

They find biblical evidence for Jesus’ own experience especially in his ‘cry of dereliction’: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46 = Mark 15:34). This is not analysed in any detail, but is simply taken to indicate that Jesus was separated, and subjectively experienced this separation. It is evident in every case cited below that the cry is held in close association with, among others, 2 Corinthians 5:21.³² It is not clear in every case, as discussion is sometimes too brief, that the cry is actually being interpreted in the light of the Pauline text. It might simply be that Christ’s and Paul’s meanings are assumed, and then a commonality discerned on the basis of these assumptions. However, in some cases,³³ 2 Corinthians

³⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.125-126; Hagin, *Name*, p.33; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, p.24.

³¹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.91, 219 in the light of one another; Hagin, *New Birth*, p.9; *Name*, pp.30-31; Copeland, *What Satan Saw*, side 1.

³² Kenyon, *Father*, p.126, *What Happened*, pp.43-44; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6; *Name*, pp.29-32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, pp.4-5.

³³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.126; *What Happened*, p.43; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

5:21 does seem to function as a ‘key to unlock’ the cry. Very occasionally, allusions to Galatians 3:13 are juxtaposed with 2 Corinthians 5:21.³⁴

Further, their understanding that this state lasted until Jesus was ‘born again in hell’ immediately prior to his physical resurrection rests, for instance, on Acts 2:24,³⁵ which is taken to indicate that Christ’s physical resurrection occurred immediately after God’s loosing him from the ‘pains’ (therefore consciously experienced) of (‘spiritual’) death.

While each author points to the Bible as the only source of his thinking, there is reason to assume that his interpretation of the relevant passages is not originally conceived by him. Hagin seems to be directly dependent on Kenyon, in view of his widespread plagiarism of the latter (see §§1.3.2; 1.6.3), sometimes of passages directly relevant to JDS teaching (see §6.2.2). In turn Copeland probably depends on Hagin and Kenyon (see §1.3.3). Kenyon’s sources are less clear. As discussed in §2.5.2, he listened to, read, and appreciated the teaching of a number of prominent leaders in the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements, but McConnell especially claims that he drew upon themes in New Thought and Christian Science.³⁶

A survey of both sets of sources achieves scant results. Higher Life and Faith Cure authors paid little attention to the concept of Christ’s separation from God, or to the biblical passages, such as records of the ‘cry of dereliction’, that might undergird it. Their interest was far more consistently in the ‘blood’. However, attestation to this theme was not entirely absent. A. J. Gordon, the author Kenyon quoted most, wrote that Christ “was forsaken of God, during those fearful agonies.”³⁷

³⁴ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.136, 137.

³⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.132; *What Happened*, p.59; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, pp.2-3; cf. Hagin’s use of Acts 2:27 in *Name*, pp.32-33.

³⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, part 2; cf. Perriman, *Faith*, pp.66, 70.

³⁷ Gordon, *In Christ*, p.41. He also referred to the ‘cry of dereliction’ (*In Christ*, pp.46, 59), but for other expository purposes. References in Mabie’s work to Jesus’ separation from God have already been noted (§3.3.2).

New Thought and Christian Science writers did not teach that Jesus was separated from God on the cross. Mary Baker Eddy and Ralph Waldo Trine both referred to the ‘cry of dereliction’, but with different results. For Eddy,

The burden of that hour was terrible beyond human conception. The distrust of mortal minds, disbelieving the purpose of his mission, was a million times sharper than the thorns which pierced his flesh. The real cross, which Jesus bore up the hill of grief, was the world’s hatred of Truth and Love. Not the spear nor the material cross wrung from his faithful lips the plaintive cry, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” It was the possible loss of something more important than human life which moved him, – the possible misapprehension of the sublimest influence of his career. This dread added the drop of gall to his cup.³⁸

Trine, on the other hand, declared:

Concerning that love and care he never had had any doubt; and he had no doubt here. When he cried near the close: ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,’ he neither thought: nor said: ‘My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ The real meaning of these Aramaic words is: ‘My God, for this end was I kept. I am fulfilling my destiny. I am dying for the truth that Thou gavest me; to this end was I born; to this end I am now come.’³⁹

It is clear that neither Eddy’s understanding nor Trine’s bizarre rendition of the cry resembles Kenyon’s viewpoint.⁴⁰ If any doctrinal influence on this point can be traced among Kenyon’s immediate predecessors, it was the prominent proponent of Faith Cure, and opponent of Christian Science, A. J. Gordon.

4.2.6 Conclusion to §4.2

Such is Kenyon’s, Hagin’s and Copeland’s case: a separation occurred which lasted until just before Christ’s physical resurrection. While the separation was relational, it is also understood to have been spatial. In this separation, God was turning aside in justice from the sin that Christ had become. This could be expressed as either the human Jesus suffering separation from God, or abandonment of the Son by the Father. This understanding is seen by them to be biblically based. In fact, the texts they refer to are relatively few in number, and Jesus’ ‘cry of dereliction’ receives the most attention, often in association with 2 Corinthians 5:21, while the timing of the separation primarily finds support in Acts 2:24. There is no evidence that Kenyon

³⁸ Eddy, *Science*, pp.50-51.

³⁹ Trine, *Man*, ch.16.

⁴⁰ If, as McConnell in particular asserts, Kenyon had been influenced in this respect most of all by New Thought, one might expect his statements to be that Jesus was separated from the Christ. In fact, references to ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ in this context are interchangeable in his writings (e.g. *Father*, p.127).

gained his view from New Thought or Christian Science, but it may have been supported by testimony within Faith Cure.

The rest of this chapter will consider existing evaluations of this position, and offer further discussion about its possible usefulness. At this stage, however, it is worth observing the lack of sophistication in its exposition. This is understandable, given the background of JDS teachers and the context and genre of JDS teaching. Nevertheless, it weakens the teaching, for it renders it vulnerable to several criticisms that might not have such force if obvious implications of the teaching had been explicated in the first place.

4.3 Criticisms of the JDS position

Among critics of JDS doctrine, such as several of those reviewed in §§1.5-1.8, voices are raised in concern about exegesis of key texts. In other words, a biblical case is made for resisting the JDS account of this alleged aspect of Christ's death. To these criticisms the thesis now turns.

Not all critics of JDS teaching distance themselves entirely from the articulation of Jesus' separation from God set out above. Perriman is perhaps the most accommodating. He accepts that Christ's 'cry of dereliction', for instance, can be understood as JDS doctrine takes it, though he is equally quick to observe that it does not have to be.⁴¹ Nevertheless, most critics raise significant objections. Some critics claim that the separation simply did not occur. Their criticisms vary between the charge that JDS teaching misunderstands Christ's 'cry of dereliction' and the claim that such a separation would be impossible. Other criticisms, accepting that some sort of separation occurred, complain that the JDS view is exaggerated. The exaggeration is seen to relate to the length of time that the separation lasted, and/or to the degree to which it occurred. These will be presented in turn: the possibility of a separation in §4.3.1; and an exaggeration of it in §4.3.2.

⁴¹ Perriman, *Faith*, pp.111-112.

4.3.1 Criticisms concerning the possibility of a separation

While some critics believe that a degree of separation occurred, others deny it entirely. Brandon writes, “Even in Christ’s darkest hour, the Father and Son relationship [*sic*] continued unbroken.”⁴² Similarly, Bowman opines, “Although Jesus’ words here [Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34] may seem to imply that he really was forsaken or abandoned by God, that is in fact not the case.”⁴³

Both these authors agree that JDS doctrine has misunderstood Christ’s ‘cry of dereliction’. For Brandon, the cry did not articulate a rupture in relationship, but a lack of protection from the horrors of crucifixion.⁴⁴ Bowman appeals to other interpretations of the cry. He makes use of the argument that one can feel deserted by God without this actually being the case. His main concern, however, is that the whole of Psalm 22, the beginning of which the cry quotes, should be heard, including its latter sections of hope and trust. Thus, on the basis that “the psalmist is *not* saying that God has *really* abandoned or forsaken him”, Jesus too “was confident that God had not really abandoned him at all.”⁴⁵ None of these understandings of the cry is original. Whether they are accurate or helpful is a matter which requires further discussion, to which §4.4 will be devoted.

Another argument that Bowman employs in opposing the possibility of Christ’s abandonment by God is that such an event would be impossible, however it were conceived. Both an intra-trinitarian schism between Father and Son, and a dissolution of the divine and human in Christ (which he sees as a temporary cessation of the divinity of Christ) are inconceivable to his theology and Christology.⁴⁶ Therefore, Christ merely felt abandoned, without this being the case. Hanegraaff, who is prepared to countenance some sort of very temporary ‘forsaken’-ness (his inverted commas), agrees that a genuine division is, however, quite impossible.⁴⁷

⁴² Brandon, *Health*, p.127.

⁴³ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.171; cf. p.174.

⁴⁴ Brandon, *Health*, pp.126-127.

⁴⁵ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.172-173, quoting p.172 (*italics original*).

⁴⁶ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.173, 175.

⁴⁷ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161 (cf. pp.169, 174, 175).

Again, such concerns are far from original. However, they are widely challenged. The possibility of a separation will therefore be explored at some length in §4.4.

4.3.2 Criticisms concerning exaggeration of the separation

As has already been stated, criticisms include complaints both that the length of time for which this separation lasted is unwarrantably stretched in the JDS presentation, and that the nature of the separation experienced by Christ is exaggerated. With regard to the length of time over which it occurred, appeal is made by critics to those verses which indicate that Christ experienced God's presence and blessing immediately after his physical death (e.g. Luke 23:43, 46). On this basis, it is concluded that any separation that had taken place was now finished.⁴⁸ While the issue of timing cannot claim to be the most important aspect of the controversy surrounding JDS doctrine, it is nevertheless worthy of discussion, particularly in view of the interest taken recently in 'Holy Saturday' by theologians from both Roman Catholic and Protestant quarters. This matter will thus form the substance of §4.5.

Criticisms that the nature or extent of the separation has been exaggerated are not expressed with sufficient detail or clarity for a response to be mounted. For instance, McConnell willingly admits that Christ was 'alienated' from God ("because of man's sin"), but is unwilling to accept Copeland's terminology, that he was 'severed' (which is "more" than alienation).⁴⁹ McConnell offers no clear indication, however, as to the manner in which being severed is 'more' than being alienated. While a guess could be offered, any subsequent discussion would inevitably be about that guess rather than about McConnell's actual view. In similar vein, Hanegraaff accepts that Christ was mysteriously and "momentarily 'forsaken' by the Father", but this forsakenness is less than division: "the Godhead cannot be divided, or else God, as revealed by Scripture, would cease to exist – an impossibility."⁵⁰ As in McConnell's case, no discussion is offered about the difference between being forsaken and being

⁴⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.128-129; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.162, 165-167. Neither of these authors refers in these passages to separation as such, but they indicate their belief that Christ's redeeming suffering was over at the point of his physical death.

⁴⁹ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120.

⁵⁰ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161.

divided, and so no sustained response can be offered. All that can be usefully observed is that at this point the debaters seem to be unduly pedantic, ‘straining at gnats’ in order to find some distance between their own views and those of JDS teaching. It might be reasonably speculated that there is no significant semantic distinction between being ‘alienated’ and ‘severed’, or between being ‘forsaken’ and ‘divided’, other than in the connoted harshness of the various terms.

4.3.3 Conclusion to §4.3

The criticisms of the JDS understanding of a separation between Jesus and God on the cross and in the grave have raised three significant questions. The first is about the ‘cry of dereliction’ itself. Clearly, its possible meaning(s) need to be considered as part of the construction of a view concerning this postulated separation. Secondly, the question has been raised about whether such a separation was even possible, and if so, how it can be conceived. Furthermore, the timing of the alleged separation requires further thought. These questions will gain the attention of the rest of the chapter.

4.4 The possibility of a separation

§4.3 indicated that, among other issues, a key consideration concerning Christ’s possible separation from God is interpretation of his ‘cry of dereliction’, and of various other New Testament data. §4.4.1 will review past interpretations of the cry. §4.4.2 will offer an exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, where it is recorded. §4.4.3 will consider wider New Testament perspectives relevant to the possibility of a separation.

4.4.1 History of interpretation of the ‘cry of dereliction’⁵¹

Interpretation of the cry did not ‘get off to a good start’. The attendant crowd’s understanding, that Jesus was calling for Elijah, is dismissed immediately by Matthew’s and Mark’s narratives. He was calling God. The centurion, on the other hand, echoed the evangelists’ assessment (Matthew 27:54; cf. 2:15, etc.; Mark 15:39;

⁵¹ Ulrich Luz offers a historical survey of interpretation of the cry, tracing the effect, as he sees it, of a diminution in belief that the incarnate Christ subsisted as two natures in one person (*Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus: Mt 26-28* [Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 2002], pp.335-342).

cf. 1:1). In Mark, it might have been the cry that led him to this view. This is not entirely clear, for Jesus offered a later (inarticulate?) cry (Mark 15:37), and it may have been this later cry that won the centurion's approval. However, if it was the 'cry of dereliction', this might suggest that he heard it as an expression of impressive and noble trust. However, when Matthew retained the cry, he crafted the centurion's assessment of the sufferer in such a way that what impressed the centurion was now not the noble way in which Christ deported himself, but a number of extraneous signs (Matthew 27:54). If Matthew is the earliest extant interpreter of Mark's record of the cry, it seems he distanced it from an expression of noble trust that was recognised by onlookers. The other two canonised gospels simply omit the saying. This might suggest that their authors, if aware of it, saw it as a statement of despair, and thus as somehow undermining their presentation of Christ's death, for certainly both of them portray this as selfless (Luke 23:28; John 19:26-27), trusting (Luke 23:43; John 19:28a), and noble (Luke 23:47; John 19:30). Even this consideration, however, does not provide a certain answer, for Luke and John may simply have been unaware of the tradition which included this saying (this is, admittedly, far less likely for Luke than for John, for the close verbal similarity of Luke 23:44 with Mark 15:33 – concerning the three hours of darkness – suggests redactional dependence at this point).

The church in its earlier centuries focused little on the 'cry of dereliction' in its discussions about Christ's death. Athanasius (c.293-373) was challenged by the Arians into discussing the cry, for to them it and similar prayers were evidence that the Word was not eternal God. In response, Athanasius, defending the impassible deity of the Word, denied the possibility of an intra-trinitarian rupture, and regarded the cry as an entirely human one, as opposed to one uttered by the Word.⁵² Ambrose (c.340-397) accepted that Christ felt separated, but not that he was.⁵³ John Chrysostom (347-407) effectively 'turned round' the cry, so that it became evidence that Christ was "no adversary of God" and was "of one mind with Him that begat Him."⁵⁴

⁵² Athanasius, *Against the Arians* III ch.XXIX:54-56 (NPNF II/IV, pp.423-424).

⁵³ Ambrose, *Faith* II, VII:56 (NPNF II/X, p.231).

⁵⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homily* LXXXVIII (NPNF I/X, p.521).

Augustine, in his exposition of Psalm 22, appealed to Romans 6:6 in order to claim that the ‘cry of dereliction’ contained “not the words of righteousness, but of my sins. For it is the old man nailed to the Cross that speaks, ignorant even of the reason why God hath forsaken him.”⁵⁵ Augustine thereby distanced the cry from the experience of Jesus himself. However, when expounding the creed, Augustine pursued a different argument. Referring to the cry, he did on this occasion concede that Christ’s experience was expressed, and that he was deserted, but only in a limited manner: “He did as it were leave Him for present felicity, not leave Him for eternal immortality.”⁵⁶

Further slight but intriguing evidence for the early church’s understanding of the cry lies in its record in the so-called *Gospel of Peter* 5:19. There, Jesus on the cross cried “My power, [my] power, you have forsaken me.” It is hard to date this evidence. The Akhmîm codex in which the words appear comes perhaps from the seventh to ninth centuries. From the time of its publication in 1892, it was identified with the second century *Gospel of Peter*. Foster questions this identification, though his conclusions are challenged by Lührmann.⁵⁷ Also, whether this record is independent of the canonised gospels is a moot point. Cameron is confident that it is, and that it reproduces early oral tradition.⁵⁸ Kazen takes the opposite view, regarding the *Gospel of Peter* as a late redaction dependent on the synoptics.⁵⁹ If it is a redaction, the change from ‘God’ to ‘power’ presents the intriguing possibility that here Jesus discovers that he no longer has miraculous power, and so cannot rescue himself from the cross.⁶⁰ Thus he cries in disappointment. However, as Hurtado observes, it is more than possible that ‘Power’ is simply a circumlocution for ‘God’.⁶¹

Moving to the church’s second millennium, Aquinas took the cry to mean that God had not protected Jesus from the wider suffering of the cross. It seems that Aquinas

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, Psalm 22 (NPNF I/VIII, p.58).

⁵⁶ Augustine, *On the Creed* 10 (NPNF I/III, p.373).

⁵⁷ Paul Foster, ‘Are there any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*?’, *NTS* 52 (2006), pp.1-28; cf. Dieter Lührmann, ‘Kann es Wirklich Keine Frühe Handschrift des Petrus-evangeliums Geben?’, *NovT* XLVIII.4 (2006), pp.379-383.

⁵⁸ Ron Cameron, *The Other Gospels* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1982), p.77.

⁵⁹ Thomas Kazen, ‘Sectarian Gospels for Some Christians?’ *NTS* 51:4 (2005), pp.561-578 (p.569).

⁶⁰ So R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), p.653, n.47.

⁶¹ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, p.446.

could not conceive of Jesus' being separated from God, for the "higher part" of his soul "enjoyed perfect bliss all the while he was suffering."⁶²

By the time of the reformation, the approach to the cry had changed, and it was now understood as an expression of real abandonment. Luther, quoting Matthew 27:46, wrote in terms remarkably similar in some respects to those used by Kenneth Copeland:

Christ fought with death and felt nothing in His heart but that He was forsaken of God. And in fact He was forsaken by God. This does not mean that the deity was separated from the humanity – for in this person who is Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, deity and humanity are so united that they can never be separated or divided – but that the deity withdrew and hid so that it seemed, and anyone who saw it might say, "This is not God, but a mere man, and a troubled and desperate man at that." The humanity was left alone, the devil had free access to Christ, and the deity withdrew its power and let the humanity fight alone.⁶³

Luther clearly wanted to differentiate between separation and withdrawal, preferring the latter to the former as a description of the occurrence on the cross. This must not, however, be regarded as a pronounced 'softening' of the experience in Luther's mind. It was still forsakenness, and was "sublime, spiritual suffering, which He felt in His soul, a suffering that far surpasses all physical suffering."⁶⁴

Calvin's portrayal was more nuanced: Christ "felt himself to be in some measure estranged from" his Father, but was concurrently "assured by faith that God was reconciled to him." This feeling of estrangement was not mistaken, for God instigated it as judgment of the guilt Christ 'took' as he "endured the punishments due to us."⁶⁵ Christ's experience of forsakenness was thus deep and real:

Certainly no abyss can be imagined more dreadful than to feel that you are abandoned and forsaken of God, and not heard when you invoke him, just as if he had conspired your destruction. To such a degree was Christ dejected, that in the depth of his agony he was forced to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The view taken by some, that he here expressed the opinion

⁶² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a. 46:8 ET Thomas Gilby, gen. ed., (Westminster: Blackfriars, 1958), vol.54, p.37.

⁶³ Luther, *Psalm 8*, *LW* 12, pp.126-127.

⁶⁴ Luther, *Psalm 8*, *LW* 12, p.124.

⁶⁵ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists* Vol.III, ET William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 [1558]), pp.318-319; cf. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Ps.22:1) ET James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979 [1557]), p.361.

of others rather than his own conviction, is most improbable; for it is evident that the expression was wrung from the anguish of his inmost soul.⁶⁶

In subsequent centuries, protestant Christianity continued occasionally to refer to the ‘cry of dereliction’ as evidence of a separation on the cross. The British pastor-theologian R. W. Dale was unequivocal that this occurred.⁶⁷ Other nineteenth century expositors took a different view. Schleiermacher’s (1768-1834) preaching occasioned Barth’s later ire by reasoning (with reference to Psalm 22:1) that, as Barth put it, “In adopting the words Jesus shows that... even at this moment he could think just as clearly and cheerfully about his death as in his last addresses to his disciples.” Knowing the whole psalm, Jesus indicated consciousness of “joy in” God.⁶⁸ No separation, clearly, was perceived by Christ. This can be understood as consonant with Schleiermacher’s portrayal of Jesus’ “consciousness of the singularity of His knowledge of God and of His existence in God.”⁶⁹

In contrast to both Dale and Schleiermacher, John McLeod Campbell (1800-1872) denied any separation on the cross, while taking the cry with great seriousness. The cry, firmly interpreted in the light of the whole psalm, indicated not Christ’s abandonment by the Father, but his suffering human enmity. McLeod Campbell’s comments are elucidated by his wider programme to rescue Scottish federal Calvinism from a dualistic contrasting between a wrathful God and a loving Christ who endured God’s wrath. For McLeod Campbell, the wrath Christ endured was primarily that of humanity. God the Father and Christ the Son stood in complete unity in the work of redemption.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Bk II, ch.XVI, ET Henry Beveridge (Vol.I, London: James Clarke & Co., Limited, 1962 [1536]), p.444; cf. p.446.

⁶⁷ R. W. Dale, *The Atonement* (23rd edn London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1904 [1875]), p.60. The similar view of C. H. Spurgeon was mentioned in §3.3.2.

⁶⁸ Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher* ET Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982 [1923/4]), p.84. For Barth, Schleiermacher’s rendition was one in which “the word of dereliction loses all its offensiveness and changes into a statement of its opposite” (p.84).

⁶⁹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* ET John Oman (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994 [rev’d 1821]), p.247; cf. Michael Jenkins and Stephen Breck Reid, ‘John McLeod Campbell on Christ’s Cry of Dereliction: A Case Study in Trinitarian Hermeneutics’ *Evangelical Quarterly*, pp.135-149, 70:2 (1998), p.145.

⁷⁰ John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (London: MacMillan and Co., 5th edn 1878), pp.224, 240-242; cf. Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

Coming to the twentieth century, many see the cry as important and even foundational to an understanding of the atonement, giving it significant weight in their articulations.⁷¹ Moltmann especially grants it central place in his cruciform trinitarianism.⁷² It is noteworthy that many of these authors, and others, stand in line with JDS teachers in interpreting the cry as consistent with the Pauline understanding of Christ's suffering expressed especially in Galatians 3:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.⁷³ They believe that a genuine separation of some sort occurred.

In conclusion to §4.4.1, interpretations of the 'cry of dereliction' are noteworthy for their sheer variety. Of importance to discussion about the alleged 'heterodoxy' of JDS teaching is the observation that views vaguely resembling this aspect of JDS doctrine are to be found amongst this variety. That perhaps the greatest resemblance is to be found in the writing of such a prominent figure as Martin Luther tends at least superficially to support the 'orthodoxy' of the JDS view.

4.4.2 Exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34

The brief 'cry of dereliction' is recorded in only two canonised gospels: Matthew and Mark. The intentions of the evangelists in recording the cry will be considered in this subsection. First, it is important to concede the brevity of the cry and the dangers both of basing conclusions on speculation and of importing possibly foreign theological concepts into the phrase.⁷⁴ It has already been noted that JDS teachers utilise 2 Corinthians 5:21 in assessing the cry. The use of this particular text, Galatians 3:13 and others like them to 'aid', illegitimately, in interpreting Matthew's

⁷¹ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/2, p.365; III/2, p.603; IV/1, pp.215, 239; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, especially p.125: "Primacy must go to the cry of abandonment"; Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, Jürgen Moltmann, *The Experiment Hope* ET M. Douglas Meeks (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1975), p.79; *Crucified God*, pp.225-229; Leon Morris, *The Cross of Jesus* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994 [1988]), especially pp.67-75; John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Leicester: IVP, 1986), pp.78-82. Of these, Moltmann especially chooses this cry for its service in his attempt to provide a Christian answer to human abandonment, which attempt is Moltmann's major soteriology.

⁷² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation* (ET Margaret Kohl, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1979 [1977]), p.59: "Theology can receive its divine justification in Christian terms only when it continually and fully actualizes and makes present the death-cry of the forsaken Christ." Cf. *Crucified God*, p.153 and p.225: "A radical theology of the cross" must give an "answer to the question of the dying Christ."

⁷³ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/1, p.398, III/2, p.602, IV/1, p.236; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.49-50, 122, 201; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.242; Morris, *Cross*, pp.77-78; Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), p.146.

⁷⁴ Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1983), p.268.

and Mark's intentions occurs outside JDS teaching as well.⁷⁵ The weakness of foreign importation is also displayed, however, by those who argue that God could not really have abandoned Jesus, for such a thing would be 'impossible'.

Also, it is important to note that the cry is itself a quotation.⁷⁶ Recognition that it comes from Psalm 22 creates two issues. One is the need to concede that the wording is governed by the psalmist, not by Jesus. Since this is the case, it might be argued, the wording should not be pressed too closely to indicate *Jesus'*, as opposed to the psalmist's, thinking. However, the fact that Jesus chose to quote this passage as opposed to quoting any other or expressing himself in his own words means that it is 'owned' by him. The wording can be regarded as a genuine expression of his mind, as portrayed by Matthew and Mark. The other issue is the extent to which the whole psalm can be regarded as being in Jesus' thought, rather than just the first clause. This is moot. Belief that it was goes back at least as far as to McLeod Campbell,⁷⁷ and continues to be represented.⁷⁸ However, France disagrees strongly: "it is illegitimate to interpret Jesus' words as referring to the part of the psalm that he did *not* echo."⁷⁹ Certainty on this point is elusive. Suffice it to say that no firm conclusion should be arrived at that rests primarily on another part of the psalm to the exclusion of its first verse, for instance that Jesus cannot really have been abandoned by God on the basis of Psalm 22:24.

The cry is grammatically framed as a question. It is reasonable to start with the supposition, therefore, that the speaker is seeking information because he is at the

⁷⁵ E.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge: CUP, 1959), p.458; R. Alan Cole, *Mark* (TNTC. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p.243; Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, p.78. Contrast France's wise caution (*Mark*, p.653).

⁷⁶ Morris regards it as unprovable that Jesus was quoting (*Cross of Jesus*, p.71). Nevertheless, to distance the cry from the psalm seems tendentious.

⁷⁷ McLeod Campbell, *Nature of Atonement*, p.237.

⁷⁸ E.g. David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), p.355; Sherman E. Johnson, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 2nd edn 1972 [1960]), p.256; Dennis W. Jowers, 'The Theology of the Cross as Theology of the Trinity: A Critique of Jürgen Moltmann's Staurocentric Trinitarianism', pp.245-266, *Tyndale Bulletin* 52.2 (2001), pp.258-259, quoting Erich Fromm; (tentatively) D. E. Nineham, *Saint Mark* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), pp.428-429.

⁷⁹ R. T. France, *Matthew* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p. 398 (italics original); also W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr, *Matthew Volume III* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), p.625; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to St Mark* (London: MacMillan, 2nd edn 1966 [1952]), p.594.

very least ‘puzzled’,⁸⁰ or more probably, given the strength of the word ‘forsaken’, bewildered and appalled. However, verbal communication often exhibits significant disparity between its grammatical form and its semantic function. Despite its grammatical form, then, it may not be seeking to elicit information so much as to operate as a declaration – of shock, of horror, of consternation – and even as a complaint. Something profound and appalling seems to have happened that has caused this violent emotional reaction in the speaker.

When discussion turns to what this happening may have been, the immediate literary context seems to supply an obvious answer: Jesus is being tortured, hanging on a cross. He means, “Why have you abandoned me *to this*?” Insofar as Psalm 22 can be taken as prophetically referring to Jesus, it seems to confirm this (Psalm 22:6-8, 14-18 find echoes in the crucifixion narratives). It is surely natural that this appalling end to Jesus’ life should have wrung the cry from his lips. He has served his God faithfully all his life, has always acted on God’s behalf, has always prioritised obedience to God, and has fought off strong temptation to do otherwise (Matthew 4:1-10 = Mark 1:13). The covenant promises, interpreted by psalmist and prophet, declared that he should expect long healthy life and many sons (Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 1; 91; 121; 127; Isaiah 60; etc.). Now he meets a criminal’s end. He has every right to cry out appalled. Thus he “utters the complaint of the righteous sufferer.”⁸¹ It is possible that Christ’s cry came *now* because of the cumulative effect of relentless cruelty that finally gave him voice, with the taunting suggestion that God might indeed rescue him being the ‘last straw’ (Matthew 27:43).

However, the evangelists perhaps do not intend this interpretation. They present Jesus as a man who knew from an early stage that he would die at the hands of the authorities, and would do so for a godly purpose (Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:28; 26:28 = Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:45; 14:24). By the time he reached the cross, he had already been through a massive crisis of resolve, a crisis which he had won (Matthew

⁸⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p.722. ‘Puzzled’ is, however, perhaps an inaccurate understatement. In *Cross of Jesus*, Morris writes of ‘perplexity’ (p.68). This seems more appropriate.

⁸¹ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p.683.

26:36-44 = Mark 14:32-40). Furthermore, once he hung there, he had already experienced prolonged psychological and physical torture (Matthew 26:67-68; 27:26-31, 35; Mark 15:15, 17-20, 24). Throughout these abuses, according to Matthew's and Mark's silence, Jesus uttered not a word of complaint to God or people, and attempted no resistance or retaliation. It is thus also possible that some new appalling tragedy led to these words. If the latter is so, a natural place to seek an answer concerning what the tragedy may have been is in the strongest word in the cry: ἐγκατέλιπες ('forsaken', 'abandoned' or 'deserted'). Although Matthew and Mark do not emphasise Christ's lifelong communion with his heavenly Father to the extent that Luke and John do, nevertheless the impression gained is that Jesus had always known fellowship with God. Certainly at pivotal moments in his life he received overt paternal reassurance and sustenance (Matthew 3:17; 17:5 = Mark 1:11; 9:7). Was this fellowship and assurance missing now, as Jesus hung on the cross? Was heaven silent, and God 'distant'? The evidence is meagre, speculation must be tentative, and certainty is impossible. But *perhaps* Jesus' cry testified to a genuine sense of desertion by his heavenly Father.⁸² Admittedly, if the whole psalm is being alluded to, then Psalm 22:24 points away from a relational abandonment of Christ by God.⁸³ However, as stated earlier, it cannot be assumed that the evangelists meant their readers to conclude that Christ was alluding to the whole psalm.

Whether Jesus was abandoned 'inwardly', or the abandonment to which he testified only referred to his appalling outward circumstances,⁸⁴ the rest of the cry helps to

⁸² Many commentators see little or no 'perhaps': the cry is of (at least a feeling of) dereliction. So Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983), p.73 ("abandoned"); James A. Brooks, *Mark* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1991), p.261 ("abandoned by God"); Cole, *Mark*, p.243 ("unclouded communion... broken"); Cranfield, *Mark*, p.458 ("not merely a felt, but a real, abandonment"); Floyd V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), p.297 ("feels left alone"); France, *Gospel of Mark*, p.653 ("feels abandoned"); France, *Matthew*, p.398 ("real sense of alienation"); D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1995), p.844 ("breach with his Father"); Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, p.71 ("a real abandonment"); Morris, *Matthew*, p.722 ("communion... mysteriously broken"); Stott, *Cross of Christ*, p.81 ("actual and dreadful separation"); Tidball, *Message of the Cross*, p.145 ("his Father had deserted him").

⁸³ Other 'messianic' psalms might be employed as well, e.g. Ps.16:10 LXX (οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου). However, Kenyon used Psalm 88 to argue that Christ in his 'spiritual death' was in despair (*Father*, p.127). Here the psalmist was like those ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς σου ἀπώσθησαν (Psalm 88:5, LXX).

⁸⁴ So Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a. 47:3 (ET vol.54, p.63); Brandon, *Health*, pp.126-127; E. P. Gould, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896), p.294.

indicate Jesus' response to the horror he was experiencing. The wording suggests continuing faith in God, and a degree of continuing fellowship with God. Although Jesus was experiencing some form of abandonment, be it to his circumstances or to an inner God-forsaken silence, the very fact that he asked the question is testimony to his prevailing dependence on God and expectation that God could be turned to in the midst of this torment. Furthermore, Christ's use of 'my', governed admittedly by the psalm, speaks of his personal relationship with this God. His question was thus essentially paradoxical: "You are the God who is not available; yet you are the God who can be both related to and spoken to." This paradox is especially stark if the sense of abandonment was an inner one.

4.4.3 A 'canonical' view

It is clear from exegesis of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 that these verses do not demand that a separation occurred. Matthew and Mark may simply not have intended such an idea. However, it is equally clear that the wording does not rule out the possibility. It has already emerged that, for JDS doctrine, 2 Corinthians 5:21 (and very occasionally Galatians 3:13) is 'pressed into service' at this point. As stated in §4.4.2, it is not valid to use 2 Corinthians 5:21 or any Pauline text as an aid in seeking Matthew's and Mark's intentions. However, if exegesis leaves an open question as to whether some inner abandonment was felt by the Matthean/Markan Jesus, it may be reasonable, at a 'canonical' level of biblical reflection, to posit that Jesus experienced something to which both the cry and Paul's reflections attest, and to an understanding of which each might contribute in a different way.

However, before discussion turns to the Pauline testimony, it must return to the silence of Luke and John concerning the 'cry of dereliction'. It has already been stated that, while John may not have known of this tradition, Luke's apparent redactional dependence on Mark at this point makes his ignorance unlikely. Furthermore, John 16:32 explicitly denies the absence of God from Christ. Of course, an artificial harmony between the biblical voices need not be sought, still less engineered. Nevertheless, the point can simply be made that an argument from Luke's and John's silence regarding the cry is precisely that, with all the potential

pitfalls attendant upon arguments from silence, and John 16:32 may be a generic statement about God's presence with Christ throughout his ministry, rather than a diagnosis of the state of affairs during the crucifixion itself.

Discussion can now turn to Paul. 2 Corinthians 5:21 will receive fuller attention in §5.5.3. At this stage of the discussion, it is sufficient to observe that Paul intended to indicate by way of his terse metaphor that the crucified Jesus was being treated as if he had sinned, at least by the people who crucified him. To believe that *God* treated Jesus as if he had sinned, and as a result ceased reassuring personal fellowship with him, is certainly not the only way of understanding these texts. It is, however, one with a long held and widespread Christian tradition.

Those who hold it challenge the counter-argument that a separation would be impossible. Essentially, their point is that the counter-argument invalidly presumes *a priori* decisions about what it is possible or impossible for God to do.⁸⁵ For instance, to Hanegraaff who declares, “the Godhead cannot be divided, or else God... would cease to exist – an impossibility”,⁸⁶ Lewis ‘replies’ with reference to Barth and Eberhard Jüngel (1934-): “In that self-forsakenness by which the Father abandons and delivers up the Son, Godness itself is not abandoned, given *away* to the point of cessation, but maintained, revealed, perfected.”⁸⁷ Clearly, it is right to challenge an unimaginative tradition-bound denial of the possibility of certain divine actions or experiences if the Bible records that such actions and experiences occurred. Even where the Bible leaves such questions open, premature conclusiveness on the basis of theological assumptions is unwise.

However, these and similar authors offer their own theological importation at this point: a separation was vital to the dynamics of salvation. Reference is often made to Christ's suffering separation as a substitution, or representation, in which Christ's experience of abandonment mirrored in some way that deserved by humanity, and

⁸⁵ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.186; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, pp.214-216, cf. *Experiment Hope*, pp.73-75, 82; cf. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, pp.166, 168.

⁸⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.161.

⁸⁷ Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.194.

was undergone to rescue humanity from such abandonment.⁸⁸ Those who hold such a view thus agree with Calvin's famous comment that "Nothing had been done if Christ had only endured corporeal death."⁸⁹ In fact, in this one aspect, at least, they agree, for all their vast difference in context, with Copeland, who scandalised McConnell by pronouncing to him in personal correspondence about Jesus' death that "when His blood poured out it did not atone."⁹⁰

It is not the purpose of this thesis to evaluate theories of the atonement. It is sufficient at this point to observe that JDS teaching is not alone in constructing a view of Christ's death in which the 'cry of dereliction' and 2 Corinthians 5:21 are both attended to.

4.4.4 Conclusion to §4.4

In conclusion to this section, JDS teaching emerges as consonant with a significant proportion of post-Reformation Christianity, both in its method of interpreting the 'cry of dereliction', its use of 2 Corinthians 5:21, and the conclusion thus reached, that Christ was separated from God. Insofar as JDS teaching offers an admittedly unsophisticated version of this belief, it can at least on this point be regarded as 'orthodox', rather than being the 'heresy' portrayed by some of its critics.

One obvious weakness in the method is that it is highly speculative. Much theological 'weight' is being placed on a very few texts, which themselves are brief

⁸⁸ E.g. Barth, *CD* II/1, pp.398-399; IV/1, p.230; 'The Humanity of God' [1956], ET Clifford Green (ed.), *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1991 [1989]), pp.46-66 (p.62); Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Elucidations* ET John Riches (London: SPCK, 1975 [1971]), p.51; *Mysterium*, pp.12, 168-170, 181; Moltmann, *Experiment Hope*, pp.79-80 (cf. *Future of Creation*, p.62; Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.45 n.4, 90-91); Morris, *Cross of Jesus*, ch.5. While, for Barth, the separation expressed in the 'cry of dereliction' was sometimes identified with the hell of rejection Christ experienced as he bore human sin (e.g. *CD* II/2, p.365), at other times the cry was associated with a 'slighter' separation that was not in itself adequate to achieve atonement, for it was the separation experienced by individuals depicted in the Old Testament as they sank down in physical death into sheol (*CD* III/2, pp.589-592). This 'nothingness' was "comfortless but tolerable" (p.603). Christ's experience went 'beyond' this. God actively inflicted Christ with his just wrath: "Here the alienation from God becomes an annihilatingly painful existence in opposition to Him" (p.603). In rather similar fashion, Balthasar characterises the *separation* as the *presence* of God's oppressive punishment (*Glory* VII, p.209).

⁸⁹ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch.XVI. (ET Vol.I, p.443).

⁹⁰ Copeland, correspondence to McConnell, 1979, quoted in McConnell, *Promise*, p.120. Italics removed.

and relatively opaque. Secondly, these texts need to be brought together from disparate parts of the New Testament canon to form a conclusion that no text on its own demands, nor that the texts together demand. Thirdly, wider issues of alleged theological necessity are called into the equation. While conceding all these weaknesses, the belief that a separation occurred does not seem to be disprovable. Therefore, this chapter will continue on the justifiable basis that a separation *might* have happened. With this possibility in mind, JDS teaching's claim that it did occur can obviously be criticised for being unduly certain about that which is uncertain, and making implausibly 'plain' that which is shrouded in mystery.⁹¹ However, evaluation of this aspect of JDS teaching cannot end at that juncture. The criticisms reviewed in §4.3.2 included the issue of timing: did this postulated separation last until resurrection morning? This will be considered in §4.5. Further evaluation is also needed concerning what was allegedly involved in the separation, and will be considered in §4.6.

4.5 The timing of a possible separation

As stated in §4.2.4, JDS teachers believe that Jesus was separated from God the whole time that his body lay in the grave, as well as for the hours on the cross. For this, as indicated in §4.3.2, they have been criticised by those who observe that, according to Luke 23:43, 46, Jesus was confident that his fellowship with God after his physical death would be intact. This section will evaluate these reconstructions of events. However, it is difficult to defend the claim that the precise length of time for which Jesus was possibly separated from God – a number of hours or a number of days – is as important as other aspects of the discussion that have been raised in this chapter. So this section will be brief, and the detail limited.

As stated earlier, a key verse supporting JDS understanding is Acts 2:24. For Kenyon, an important matter concerning this verse is that 'pain' or 'pang' is more usefully understood as 'birth-pang'. To Kenyon, this indicates that what is in view is Jesus' 'spiritual (re)birth' from 'spiritual death', including separation from God, to

⁹¹ Brian Onken, 'The Atonement of Christ and the "Faith" Message', n.d., accessed 26.11.03 from www.equip.org [DP060.pdf], criticises the speculativeness of JDS teaching.

spiritual life.⁹² For Copeland, who also recognises the possibility that ‘pain’ can be rendered as ‘birth pang’, the logic is that, as this death is consciously experienced as pain, it cannot refer to physical death: “Jesus had already been delivered from the pain of physical death as soon as He left His body, three days before His resurrection.” Thus the death in view is the torment of ‘spiritual death’, including separation from God.⁹³

Acts 2:24 does not offer the support that Kenyon and Copeland find there. Whether ὠνιδας is understood as ‘pains’, ‘birth-pangs’, or even ‘cords’ (from the LXX translation of the Hebrew in Psalms 18:4, 5; 116:3), and λύσας as ‘loosed’ or ‘destroyed’, there is no need to see here any death distinguishable from Christ’s physical death. It was clearly Christ’s physical resurrection to which the apostolic preaching was attesting (e.g. Acts 2:32). The references to hades in Acts 2:27,⁹⁴ 31 also do not indicate separation from God. Luke first quoted and then paraphrased Psalm 16 (Acts 2:27, 31). These excerpts have been taken to mean that Jesus was in hell, which is mistakenly identified with hades, but was not left there forever (so KJV and JDS teaching). However, Luke meant that Jesus was not in hades in the first place, as is indicated by his use of εἰς rather than ἐν.⁹⁵

While they find support for their view especially in Acts 2:24, Kenyon and Copeland, who discuss these matters more fully than Hagin, recognise that other texts might suggest different conclusions to some interpreters. Thus they must offer alternative explanations for these texts, explanations that are sometimes more impressive for their ingenuity than for their plausibility.

Unsurprisingly, they believe that all the sayings on the cross recorded in the gospels are historical. In this respect, their understanding is in common with their evangelical critics. For the critics, the sayings recorded in Luke and John indicate clearly that

⁹² Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.59.

⁹³ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; cf. *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁹⁴ Cf. Hagin’s use of this verse: *Name*, pp.32-33.

⁹⁵ The argument that the precise wording is governed by the LXX, not by Luke, falls when it is observed that Luke both quoted and paraphrased the passage, and when Luke’s redactional freedom in quoting the LXX elsewhere is noted (e.g. cf. Acts 2:17-21 with LXX Joel 3:1-5).

whatever spiritual sufferings Jesus might have gone through on the cross were over before he physically died. He was thus able confidently to place his spirit in God's hands (Luke 23:46), knowing that he had completed his atoning work (John 19:30), and that he would later that same day be in paradise (Luke 23:43). That Christ was correct in his assessment that atonement was achieved was gloriously confirmed by the miraculous tearing of the temple curtain, letting forgiven humanity into the holy of holies without the shedding of animal blood (e.g. Luke 23:45).⁹⁶

The sayings alluded to above, along with their confirmation, require a different interpretation in the JDS schema. "It is finished" (John 19:30) is taken to mean not that Christ had finished his atoning work, but that he had finished his earthly work, and in so doing he had fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant, placing him in a position now to perform his atoning work.⁹⁷ Luke 23:43 is taken to read, "I tell you today: you will be with me in paradise."⁹⁸ While the Greek can stand such a translation, it is difficult to see why Luke's Jesus would wish to emphasise the timing of his statement, rather than the timing of its fulfilment.⁹⁹ "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46) is ignored. Finally, the tearing of the curtain is not understood in terms of letting humanity in, but in terms of letting God out: God has now deserted Old Covenant Judaism, with its animal sacrifices and physical temple, in favour of his New Covenant people, brought, through the sacrifice of his Son, into the spiritual temple of the church.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that some exegetical straining is required in order to reach the understanding set out in the preceding paragraph. It is more straightforward to conclude that for Luke and John at least, Christ's physical death marked a victorious moment of completion, and an end to Christ's sufferings. If Luke and John knew of

⁹⁶ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.162, 166; Brandon, *Health*, p.124; McConnell, *Promise*, pp.128-129; Bowman, *Controversy*, p.167.

⁹⁷ Kenyon, *What Happened*, pp.47, 50; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3.

⁹⁸ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.60; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3; *Jesus In Hell*, pp.2-3.

⁹⁹ Discussion of strict chronology may be out of place here, anyway. The 'today' in view may be eschatological rather than chronological. See, e.g., John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), p.1152.

¹⁰⁰ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.42, ch.8. This is the most plausible of the exegeses presented in this paragraph. The tearing of the temple curtain is open to a large number of symbolic interpretations. See discussion of, e.g., the Lukan account in Nolland, *Luke*, p.1157; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), pp.1860-1861.

and accepted the tradition that Christ was separated from God, they surely presented it as completed now.

However, this aspect of JDS teaching receives indirect support from Barth and Moltmann, for whom the idea that Jesus the Son remained separate from God the Father whilst dead is implicit in their understanding of death (in turn informed by their monistic anthropology), which itself represents and incorporates abandonment by God. Precisely in his death he remained godforsaken, in appearance and in reality. Only his resurrection vindicated him. Balthasar was much more explicit in his tracing of Christ's godforsakenness beyond the cross and into the tomb. Thus, although their premises are markedly different from those of JDS teaching, their conclusion on this point at least is the same: Christ the Son is separate from God the Father for the whole time he is dead.

Balthasar in particular identified Christ's death during the *triduum mortis* with the Sheol of the Old Testament.¹⁰¹ There is, however, no direct biblical evidence to support this assertion. It seems just as reasonable to suggest that Christ's experience between his death and resurrection may prefigure, in his role as the "firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29), the intermediate state that his followers would in the future experience between their deaths and resurrections, a state that is with God rather than apart from him (e.g. Philippians 1:23). Thus Christ, in the passivity of death, was not continuing to suffer godforsakenness, but was accepted. This seems compatible with Luke 23:43, 46. To Barth, Luke 23:46 indicated that Jesus commended his spirit – himself – to God's "decree and disposing", which in this case was "to death."¹⁰² Balthasar glossed over the implications of these verses.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, ch.4. Both Barth and Balthasar agreed that sheol became or was replaced by hell through the Christ event (Barth, *CD III/2*, p.602; Balthasar, *Mysterium*, p.172)

¹⁰² Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.306; cf. *III/2*, p.364.

¹⁰³ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.109, 126. Balthasar did, however, accept the force of John 19:30 (*Mysterium*, p.150). Thus the work of redemption was essentially completed on the cross. Christ's time in Sheol was only an "efficacious outworking in the world beyond of what was accomplished in the temporality of history" (p.151), a "solidarity in whose absence the condition of standing for sinful man before God would not be complete" (p.161). Barth too noted John 19:30 as an indication that Christ's sacrifice was perfect (*CD IV/1*, p.281).

Moltmann effectively denies their historicity.¹⁰⁴ None of these authors seems to allow the texts' combined force to make the reasonable suggestion that at this point Christ's postulated separation from God was over.

In conclusion to this section, if Christ was separated from God, this seems to have lasted only while he hung on the cross – perhaps for the three hours of darkness referred to in the synoptics.

4.6 The nature of a possible separation

Quite apart from discussion about whether a separation between Jesus and God was even possible, and how long it might have lasted, further examination is in order concerning the nature of the separation that Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland conceive. In particular, its spatial imagery (§4.6.1), apparent contradictory nature (§4.6.2), and seemingly profound imbalance (§4.6.3) deserve consideration.

4.6.1 A spatial separation?

References in JDS teaching to spatial separation, while possibly meant metaphorically, at least appear to be intended 'literally' (see §4.2.2). As such, they appear inappropriately crude. Certainly, JDS teaching at this point exhibits commonalities with the Christianity of the first millennium, and its teaching about Christ's 'descent' into hell (see §§6.3; 6.4). However, earlier Christianity had the excuse that it inhabited a world that was *generally* thought to be flat, with a hell beneath it to be found if one dug deep enough, and a heaven in or beyond the sky. Expressions of North American Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have no such context, and therefore no such excuse.

Furthermore, JDS teachers seem to have given no thought to the implications that their references to a spatial separation have for their idea of the omnipresence of God. Also, these ideas form part of an implausible dualism (see §5.2.1) in which the

¹⁰⁴ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.147. That Luke deliberately omitted the 'cry of dereliction' from his account does not thereby entail that his record of Christ's sayings on the cross was invented, by him or by his intermediate sources.

universe seems divided into God's 'territory' and that of Satan, and in which Christ in his 'spiritual death' travelled from one territory to the other.

If a separation is to be articulated, it is surely more cogently expressed in terms which either maintain a clear relational view of the separation (often expressed by preference for the term 'abandonment' over 'separation'), or which are overtly metaphorical in their references to the spatial. The work of Moltmann is a useful example of the former, and Barth's references to the 'far country' a well-known example of the latter.¹⁰⁵

4.6.2 A contradictory understanding?

It emerged in §4.2.3 that JDS teaching offers an unsophisticated, vacillating account of precisely who was separated from whom in Christ's 'spiritual death'. Of particular concern is the contradiction evident in Kenyon's and Copeland's teaching that while on the one hand the being separated from God was 'the eternal Son', 'part' of God and his 'very inside', on the other hand the human being was separated from the divine, so that for Copeland the humanity of the victorious Christ in hell becomes of utmost importance as an example for victorious Christian living. That there is seeming contradiction in this account is not in itself problematic, for Christianity lives with paradox from beginning to end, and especially in any incarnational view of Christ's death.¹⁰⁶ What is of concern is that the relationship between the ideas remains entirely unexplored. This is understandable in terms of JDS teachers' backgrounds, audiences, and intentions, but it renders JDS teaching highly vulnerable to criticism of even a moderately sophisticated theological hue.

A survey of expositions of a separation on the cross reveals the considerable difficulties that occur when an attempt is made to 'iron out' the seeming contradiction by firmly locating the separation either between the divine and the human on the one hand or between the first and second persons of the Godhead on

¹⁰⁵ Moltmann writes repeatedly of Christ's 'godforsakenness'. For Barth's references to the 'far country' see, e.g., *CD IV/I*, pp.157, 177, 192, 280, 283.

¹⁰⁶ For discussion of paradox in incarnational theology, see D. M. Baillie, *God Was In Christ* (London: Faber, 1961 [1956]), ch.V.

the other. Examples of the former abound. In the first Christian millennium, the concern was to preserve the immutability and impassibility of God; in the second, a common tendency has been to highlight the wrath of God expressed against a Christ who was carrying the world's sin. Examples of the latter occur in more recent theology, especially in the work of Moltmann.

For those early church commentators who recognised a separation, it definitely occurred between the human, dying Christ and the non-suffering, non-changing God. Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428), while admitting that God was crucified in a sense,¹⁰⁷ yet wrote, "The Godhead was separated from the one who was suffering in the trial of death, because it was impossible for him to taste the trial of death if [the Godhead] were not cautiously remote from him."¹⁰⁸ Nestorius (c.386-c.451), whose Antiochene Christology was controversially and infamously pronounced, took a similar view.¹⁰⁹ Alexandrian 'Word-flesh' Christology might have been expected to maintain a greater unity in the person of the crucified Christ. Yet this was not the case. Nestorius' antagonist Cyril (c.378-c.444) placed all of Christ's suffering in his 'flesh', only conceding that this was 'appropriated' by the deity "for the sake of our salvation."¹¹⁰ Thus, according to Moltmann, when Cyril discussed the 'cry of dereliction', he could not see any intra-trinitarian dimension to it.¹¹¹

Moltmann offers strong arguments against this early position that understood the rupture solely as a divine-human one in order to remove God from suffering. He wisely observes that the very premise of this position – the impassibility of God – is false. It is entirely true to say that God cannot suffer because of some "deficiency in his being." This does not prevent him, however, from suffering out of the plenitude of his character, and, in particular, his love.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Incarnation* XII:11, ET Richard A. Norris, Jr., *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p.122.

¹⁰⁸ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies* 8:9, ET A. Mingana (quoted in Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.160, n.53).

¹⁰⁹ Nestorius, *First Sermon Against the Theotokos*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.128-129; cf. *Second Letter to Cyril*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.135-140, e.g. "'This is,' not my deity, but 'my body which is broken for you'" (p.138).

¹¹⁰ Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to John of Antioch*, ET Norris, *Controversy*, pp.140-145 (p.144).

¹¹¹ Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.229.

¹¹² Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.230; cf. Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, pp.198-199.

Calvin's work is a clear example of the later separation between divine and human as an expression of divine wrath against the sin Christ carried. Thus he wrote that while Christ felt abandoned, he "bore the weight of the divine anger." He stood "at the bar of God as a criminal in our stead." Throughout the crucifixion, "the divine power of the Spirit veiled itself for a moment, that it might give place to the infirmity of the flesh."¹¹³ This depiction is open to the criticism that articulations of a separation between God and Christ all too easily suggest the idea that the purpose and action of Father and Son on the cross were in some way at odds with each other (see further, §4.6.3).

Moltmann's attempts to relocate the separation within the Trinity¹¹⁴ are not dissimilar to the view of Balthasar, who independently of Moltmann also highlighted the intra-trinitarian aspect of the separation, though without denying a divine-human aspect to it.¹¹⁵ Of the two positions, the former has received more criticism. Criticism common to both is the charge that they involve a trinitarianism that tends towards tritheism. Jowers makes the criticism of Moltmann, offering a considerable bibliography of similar criticisms.¹¹⁶ Lauber offers the criticism, cautiously, of Balthasar.¹¹⁷ Wider criticism of Moltmann includes some which merely rehearses the traditional refusal of divine passibility that Moltmann, and others before him such as Barth, have successfully countered.¹¹⁸ More incisive criticism includes that which is concerned by Moltmann's absolute identifying of the immanent trinity with the economic one.¹¹⁹ As Balthasar himself wrote, "the process of establishing and

¹¹³ Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk II, ch.XVI (ET, Vol.I, pp.444, 446); cf. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.167.

¹¹⁴ E.g. Moltmann, *Crucified God*, p.207. However, Moltmann may not be entirely denying a divine-human aspect to the schism, as his use of the word 'simply' demonstrates: "In the cross of Christ, a rupture tears, as it were, through God himself. It does not simply tear through Christ, as the doctrine of the two natures states" (*Experiment Hope*, p.80). Lewis, notwithstanding, takes Moltmann to deny a divine-human rupture (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.225).

¹¹⁵ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.52, 79, 81, 109.

¹¹⁶ Jowers, 'Theology', p.26 and n.87. Richard Bauckham also refers to these criticisms, but does not accept them (*The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995], p.25).

¹¹⁷ David Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp.60-61.

¹¹⁸ E.g. Jowers, 'Theology'.

¹¹⁹ E.g. Moltmann, *Future of Creation*, p.76; *Crucified God*, p.240.

experiencing the world” must remain for God “a perfectly free decision.”¹²⁰ Balthasar overcame the problem, and preserved God’s immutability, like Barth before him, by positing an eternal kenosis which was then fully expressed in the acts of incarnation and atonement.¹²¹ In it, the primal kenosis is that of the Father, who from eternity has been giving away himself and his divinity into his Son (and the Spirit).¹²² This is expressed in the atonement, as the Father gives away, or abandons, the Son into death: Balthasar wrote that the primal kenosis implied “such an incomprehensible and unique ‘separation’ of God from himself that it *includes* and grounds every other separation – be it never so dark and bitter.”¹²³

Beyond these criticisms of Moltmann and Balthasar, it must be observed that a suggestion which posits a separation only between the divine persons would place this suffering outside the realm of human representation, and render the apparent human suffering of Christ, beyond the physical tortures, docetic (Jesus in his humanity only *seemed* to go through the spiritual suffering of abandonment; the suffering *actually* occurred only in the trinity).

In conclusion to this section about the apparently contradictory account of the separation offered in JDS teaching, in which it is sometimes the human Christ who is separated from undifferentiated God, and sometimes the divine Son who is separated from the Father, it becomes clear that attempted simplifications in which one aspect of separation is emphasised and the other denied or at least minimised do not overcome the difficulties encountered, but merely compound them.

It is thus tempting to agree with those who assert that a separation of any form on the cross was impossible, and therefore simply did not occur. However, to ‘solve the mystery’ in this way is not the only possible or plausible way to proceed. If Christ was God incarnate, then his death alone is deeply problematic to human logic, and its

¹²⁰ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, p.35; cf. Lauber, *Barth*, p.142. Lewis, however, offers a defence of Moltmann’s exposition of the economic and immanent trinity, claiming that Moltmann still retains “their notional distinction” (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.228).

¹²¹ Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.35, 79-82.

¹²² Balthasar, *Mysterium*, pp.viii, 27-36.

¹²³ Balthasar, quoted by Aidan Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth: A Guide Through Balthasar’s Dramatics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), p.165, italics in quotation.

‘inner workings’ must be seen as shrouded in mystery.¹²⁴ To accept that a separation, if it occurred, was also deeply mysterious does not demand that it should be rejected. Another possible way forward is to maintain the idea of a separation, but suggest a paradoxical combination of intra-trinitarian and divine-human aspects.

Perhaps Barth offered the most sensitive and sustained balance between these aspects of the separation.¹²⁵ Sometimes the humanity of the separated one is emphasised (while not denying the divinity):

It was to fulfil this judgment on sin that the Son of God as man took our place as sinners. He fulfils it – as man in our place – by completing our work in the omnipotence of the divine Son, by treading the way of sinners to its bitter end in death, in destruction, in the limitless anguish of separation from God.¹²⁶

Sometimes the divinity is emphasised:

We may think of the darkness which we are told later came down at the hour of Jesus’ death (Mk. 15:33), the rending of the veil of the temple (Mk. 15:37), the earthquake which shook the rocks and opened the graves (Mt. 27:51), as though – in anticipation of its own end – the cosmos had to register the strangeness of this event: the transformation of the accuser into the accused and the judge into the judged, the naming and handling of the Holy God as one who is godless.¹²⁷

In conclusion, given the obvious difficulties created by placing a separation only between the divine and human or only between the persons of the Trinity, it seems wise to follow Barth, and effectively agree with Kenyon and Copeland, by placing a posited separation *both* between the divine and the human *and* within the Trinity. The apparent difficulty with such a suggestion – that it combines two essentially contradictory notions – is lessened when inspected in the light of the incarnation. The separation of the Father from the Son *is* the separation of the divine from the human *precisely because* the Son and *not* the Father has become a human (while not ceasing to be God).¹²⁸ God the Father (the fount of the Godhead) is separated from God the

¹²⁴ Charles Wesley was right: “‘Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!” (David & Jill Wright, *30 Hymns of the Wesleys* [Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1985], p.14).

¹²⁵ Barth is read in bewilderingly different ways by his expositors. For Lauber, Barth “refrain[s] from attributing suffering directly to God, in contrast to Moltmann” (*Barth*, pp.142-143). For Lewis, Barth “learned dramatically to rethink the very doctrine of God in the light of Jesus’ death and burial. Here the already tottering edifice of immutability collapsed, terminally shaken by the revealed actuality of God’s Christomorphic passion” (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.197). Lewis’ exegesis seems more accurate (see, e.g., Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.245).

¹²⁶ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.253.

¹²⁷ Barth, *CD IV/1*, p.239.

¹²⁸ Essentially this explanation is offered by Bruce L. McCormack, with copious references to Barth (‘The Ontological Presuppositions of Barth’s Doctrine of the Atonement’, pp.346-366 in Charles E.

Human (the Son), whose divinity, though real, is kenotic (in Balthasar's sense). The potential counter-argument that the human Jesus was not *really*, then, abandoned by God, for he was still 'with' God the Son (in his abandonment by God the Father) falls, for it mistakes the two natures of Christ as two persons, who can succour each other, and it fails to recognise the utter abandonment by the Father that the Son was 'also' suffering.

4.6.3 An unbalanced presentation?

Virtually no consideration is given in JDS doctrine to ways in which, in this postulated separation, Christ and God were, paradoxically, supremely united. Interest in 2 Corinthians 5:21, for example, is not 'balanced' by interest in 2 Corinthians 5:19. That the cross was voluntarily accepted by Christ (see §4.2.4) is the nearest these teachers come to recognising that, in the midst of the separation, a deep divine unity was being expressed. Even this is given little prominence by Kenyon especially, who wrote extensively of what God did to Jesus in the crucifixion, and remarkably little of what Jesus himself did. While Hagin and Copeland are somewhat more balanced on this point, ascribing salvific activity to Christ, they do not draw out any implications from this for the relationship between Father and Son, or God and Jesus, in the crucifixion.

The New Testament sees otherwise. While the cross was in various ways portrayed as the action of God (John 3:16; Acts 2:23; Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21, etc.), it was also seen as the action of Christ (Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 10:17; Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:24, etc.). In fact, in many ways it was seen as the united action of the two. From beginning to end, Christ set out to do the will of his Father. The cross was no exception. This is perhaps most explicit in John (5:36; 10:37-38; 17:4, and note especially 10:18), but it was believed by Paul (e.g. Romans 5:8; Galatians 1:4; Philippians 2:8) and in Hebrews (9:14). In the synoptics, the unity of will that led to the cross was highlighted by the Gethsemane prayer (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). This prayer could be seen as a division of will, and suggest some hesitancy in Christ beforehand and thereafter, as well as at the time. However, there

Hill & Frank A. James III, *The Glory of the Atonement* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004], and especially p.364).

are in effect three wills evident in the prayer. There is the will of the Father, the will Jesus expressed as ‘his’ but rejected, and that third will that Christ expressed in forming his prayer: his will to do, and thus absolutely conform to, the Father’s will. The outcome of the prayer can be regarded as governing Christ’s attitude to all that followed, however appalling.

If the ‘cry of dereliction’ allows a belief that on the cross Christ the Son was separated from God the Father, then the biblical testimonies to the unity of the Father and the Son in approaching the cross allow just as firmly, if they do not in fact demand, the belief that Jesus and his Father were as close as they had ever been. *In extremis*, God and Christ remained utterly *at one* in their determination to accept the deadly consequences of human sinfulness. If Christ was in some sense separated from God on the cross, he was at that moment united with God in his resolve to endure the agony of it. It might even be appropriate to claim that at this point, Christ was *most* united with God, if what is meant is that now Christ’s resolve to conform to his Father’s will and purpose was tested to the uttermost, and therefore now most profoundly expressed, through surviving the test. This can only be expressed in paradox. Mysteriously, it is actually in this separation that the two separated partners are most radically united, for they are united in their love for the humanity which this separation seeks to save, they are united in their determination to accept the pain that the salvation demands, and they are united in their readiness to be separated.

In keeping with this biblical depiction, some of those who believe in a separation offer a much more impressive exposition of it than the JDS version, in that they retain a focus on the nearness of Christ and God in the midst of separation. This insight is retained by biblical commentators,¹²⁹ evangelical expositors,¹³⁰ and systematic theologians.¹³¹

¹²⁹ E.g. Cranfield, *Mark*, p.459.

¹³⁰ E.g. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, p.82.

¹³¹ Barth, *CD IV/2*, p.252; Balthasar, *Elucidations*, p.51.

4.7 Chapter conclusions

4.7.1 Summary

In brief, JDS teachers believe that one defining aspect of Jesus' 'spiritual death' was his separation from God. They believe that this separation, which lasted until immediately before Christ's physical resurrection, was relational but also apparently spatial, and occurred because God was justly rejecting the sin that Christ on the cross had become. It could be expressed in terms of a separation both between God and the human Jesus, and between the divine Father and Son. The belief rests upon their understanding of the 'cry of dereliction' and certain other texts brought alongside it, especially 2 Corinthians 5:21. Kenyon's adoption of this belief was not from New Thought or Christian Science. Rather, the same view was found, though rarely, in Faith Cure. For this view, JDS teaching has been criticised. According to the various critics, such a separation is either flatly impossible, or if possible is exaggerated in the JDS depiction, in terms of timing or extent.

Despite these criticisms, a survey of interpretation of the 'cry of dereliction' throughout Christian history reveals that, while there has been a great variety of ideas, belief in a separation has not been absent, and when it has occurred, it has formed an important part of articulations of the atonement. Exegesis of the canonised passages where the cry is recorded indicates that the interpretation which sees some sort of separation occurring is not necessary, but neither is it ruled out. A broader view of the New Testament does not alter this verdict. The JDS version of events is therefore not necessarily untrue to the New Testament, though it presents as plain and clear and which is rarely attested and whose attestation is, anyway, ambiguous.

Proceeding on the basis that this postulated separation might have occurred, various further observations can be presented about the JDS understanding of it. First, in regard to timing, there is more reason offered in the New Testament to regard a separation as having ceased by the time Christ physically died, than to trace it through to the time of his resurrection. In mitigation, it must be observed that JDS teachers are far from alone in adhering to the latter view. Secondly, concerning the idea of a spatial separation, JDS teaching, if it is to be taken 'literally' at this point, is

not justified. Thirdly, JDS teaching makes no effort to face the obvious dilemma that postulation of a separation creates within the context of trinitarian and incarnational belief: who was separated from whom? Again in mitigation, it may be that JDS teachers have ‘chanced upon’ an acceptable account, in which a separation between the divine and the human is held in paradoxical tension with a separation between two divine persons. Fourthly, and most importantly, there is a lack of recognition that, in this possible separation, Christ and the Father were also, paradoxically, most intimately united. This recognition is fundamental to atonement doctrine, and indeed to trinitarianism. It exhibits in the economy the eternal, utterly united, *love* for humanity of two persons of the one God.

4.7.2 Implications

The one most important criticism of the JDS rendition of Christ’s possible separation from God, then, is not that the Bible denies such a separation, or that JDS teachers ‘got the timing wrong’, or that they are crassly spatial in their imagery, or that they are unclear or inconsistent about who was separated from whom, but that this teaching, while siding with many other Christians in claiming that a separation occurred, joins unknowingly with some of these others in failing to hold in close proximity an appalling separation *and* an extraordinary unity, whether this is expressed as existing between Father and Son or between God and Jesus. This failure has important implications for trinitarianism, incarnation, and atonement. As already stated (see §2.2), it is not possible within the confines of this thesis to consider in detail JDS teaching’s trinitarianism, incarnationalism, or account of the atonement, still less to offer relevant theories in their place. Nevertheless, some observations are pertinent.

As far as the Trinity is concerned, if Moltmann and Balthasar can be accused of tritheism, when they express both a separation between and a unity of Father and Son, how much more can this accusation be directed at a depiction of separation that includes no such counterweight. If Jesus remains the divine Son while simply separated from God the Father, this seems deeply problematic for an articulation of the everlasting unity of God. It is possible that Balthasar’s account of an eternal

kenosis might ‘come to the rescue’ at this point, but it must immediately be conceded that Balthasar’s idea is highly speculative. Of course, it cannot be claimed that simply ‘balancing’ separation, paradoxically, with unity overcomes these perplexing trinitarian questions. It does, however, at least offer a possible way towards articulating the maintenance of divine unity in the midst of separation.

Turning now to the matter of incarnation, the JDS portrayal is perhaps a consequence, and certainly a confirmation of, the somewhat Apollinarian and/or adoptionistic Christology, coupled with a marked functional kenoticism, expressed within JDS teaching (see §1.4.4). These attributes of JDS incarnationalism, though difficult to reconcile, combine to form a Christology in which the divine and the human in Christ are less firmly coinherent than in traditional forms of the hypostatic union. If God can inhabit a human body, or choose to ‘come into’ a human, then God can also all too easily depart from this body or person. Fully incarnational Christology at this point seems somewhat compromised. This compromise is relieved if the complete unity of God and Christ on the cross is emphasised. It must be conceded, again, that positing the unity of God and Christ on the cross as a counterweight, rather than an alternative, to a postulated separation does not in one stroke remove the difficulty for incarnational Christology. However, it must be repeated that some difficulty already exists for incarnation in declaring that Christ was born, grew, hungered, thirsted, tired, suffered, and died (how can God do these things, such as die? ¹³²). To suggest that Christ was separated from God is in effect part of the same awkward question.

With respect to the atonement, a failure to hold a separation in paradoxical combination with unity drifts all too easily into the impression of a divided atoning purpose or action between the persons of the Godhead. Vincent Taylor was right to criticise any “division within the Godhead” in which “the compassionate Son is set

¹³² References in Christian theology to the ‘death of God’ have been consistently, and perhaps necessarily, paradoxical, from Tertullian’s (145-?220) statement that “God has died, and yet is alive for ever and ever” (*Against Marcion* II.XVI) to Jüngel’s writing “Vom Tod des lebendigen Gottes” (*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 65 [1968], pp.93-116). Both references from Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, p.240, nn.124, 126.

over against the just and holy Father.”¹³³ In the JDS presentation, the misconstrual would be more likely to be that a loving God is sacrificing a passive Jesus. Such a division of purpose or action is not explicit among JDS teachers, but their writing could be understood this way by someone predisposed to do so.

One final observation is necessary at this point: JDS teaching is by no means unique in articulating a separation on the cross that is not held in paradoxical tension with an expression of complete divine unity, and is therefore not alone in being vulnerable to the criticisms voiced in this section. Given the extent within Christianity to which these views are held, this aspect of JDS teaching, at least, can hardly be labelled as ‘heretical’. Rather, it is a relatively unsophisticated version of a nexus of beliefs widely held for many generations within fully ‘orthodox’ circles.

4.7.3 Key observations

JDS teaching’s claim that the crucified Jesus was separated from God cannot be regarded as contradicting the witness of either the Christian scriptures or the later church, at least as represented by some of their voices. As such, it cannot be validly denounced as ‘heretical’. In particular, among Kenyon’s contemporary sources, this view was held by the prominent ‘orthodox’ proponent of Faith Cure, A. J. Gordon.

In turn, any criticisms of this aspect of JDS doctrine must be directed not only at it, but also at other expressions of the same idea. Of these criticisms, the one that carries greatest force is the observation that JDS teaching fails, in its postulation of a separation between God and the crucified Christ, to highlight a simultaneous, and vitally important, unity between the two. This failure compromises the trinitarianism, incarnationalism and atonement theology of JDS doctrine, as it does of any presentation of Christ’s death that similarly fails to marry a separation or abandonment with a concomitant intimate unity.

¹³³ Vincent Taylor, *The Cross of Christ* (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1956), p.91. Taylor continued, “The true presupposition of the doctrine of the Atonement is the fact that God is love and that in the work of reconciliation Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are at one.” McLeod Campbell’s arguments against Scottish Calvinism on this point, and for divine unity in the atonement, have already been noted (§4.4.1).

5 Jesus' 'spiritual death' as partaking of a sinful, satanic nature

5.1 Introduction

JDS doctrine involves, with minor variations between the teachers, three central concepts. These are that in his 'spiritual death', Jesus was separated from God, partook of a sinful, satanic nature, and became Satan's prey. The first of these concepts was the focus of chapter 4. The third will occupy the attention of chapter 6. This chapter deals with the second: Jesus partook of Satan's sinful nature.

§§5.2 and 5.3 indicate the main features of the idea as taught by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland, and demonstrate some divergence between the three. §5.4 examines the responses made by a number of the critics introduced in §§1.5-1.8, and §5.5 focuses on the sources, including biblical ones, used by JDS teachers in forming their ideas. §5.6 discusses the extent to which JDS teaching in this respect departs from or adheres to traditional formulations concerning Christ's experiences on the cross. Finally, conclusions to the chapter will be offered in §5.7.

One of the difficulties facing the discussion presented in this chapter is that the authors under review do not at any point define 'nature'. Nor do they explicitly state whether exhibiting a 'satanic nature' involves merely 'sinfulness', a bondage to sinful tendencies, or whether in fact it means a more explicitly personal relationship with Satan. Hints are available in their writings, and are interacted with in this discussion, but the lack of overt definition does hinder the process.¹ It will emerge in early sections of this chapter that on this particular aspect of JDS teaching, Kenyon was the creative and detailed thinker. Hagin and Copeland are content to reproduce, with their own slight variations, Kenyon's views in much simpler and briefer fashion.

5.2 Satan

5.2.1 God-Satan dualism

The stark dualism between God and Satan that operates in JDS teaching has already been noted briefly (§1.4.1). Unsurprisingly, critics of JDS theology express concern about this portrayal of Satan. McConnell characterises the Word-faith view of the

¹ Bowman makes the same observation (*Controversy*, p.225).

atonement as ‘satanward’ rather than ‘godward’.² Hanegraaff devotes a whole chapter to what he calls the Word-faith movement’s ‘deification of Satan’.³ In fact, according to Hanegraaff, although “Faith teachers are not as blatantly dualistic as Zoroastrians and ancient Gnostics”,

Faith mythology features an implicit form of dualism: two forces fighting it out for control of the universe, and you never know who is finally going to win. If God had not caught Satan on a technicality, Jesus would have been doomed, humans would have been eternally lost, and Satan would have won the universe!⁴

Smail, Walker and Wright agree: Word-faith teaching displays metaphysical dualism in practice if not in theory.⁵

Despite Hanegraaff’s reference to Gnosticism, the form of dualism evinced by JDS teaching is not that in which spirit is good and matter is evil (though spirit is more important than matter; see §3.5.3). That such is the case is evidenced by the great concern of Word-faith teachers that Christians should receive *physical* healing.⁶ This dualism, while bearing vague resemblance to Zoroastrianism, is actually similar to the one found in the early church and its discussions about the atonement, in which God and Satan are at enmity with one another, and Satan can, temporarily, exercise certain powers in the human world. Some dualism of this sort is found in the New Testament, for instance in the synoptic accounts of Christ’s temptations. The dualism in Word-faith teaching is, admittedly, stark, and the number of references to Satan in JDS doctrine vast, but, as in much of the early church, the dualism is not absolute. Satan is created by God,⁷ and God has revealed that the victory is assuredly his.⁸

One way, however, in which the dualism of JDS doctrine clearly surpasses that of the New Testament is that in the former Satan is the lord of hell (contrast Matthew

² McConnell, *Promise*, p.125.

³ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, ch.11.

⁴ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.129-130.

⁵ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.64.

⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*; Hagin, *Redeemed*; Copeland, ‘Power’.

⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.57 (angel); Hagin, *Origin*, p.7 (creature); Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.6 (angel). In the early church, Origen’s dualism, in which “the creation had to be regarded as concomitant with the being of God and as eternally coexisting with him” (Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988], p.85) was effectively countered by Athanasius. See Torrance’s discussion in *Trinitarian Faith*, pp.84-86.

⁸ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, p.69-70; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45; Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.6. JDS teaching places the victory solely in past atonement, without reference to an eschatological consummation of that victory.

25:41; Revelation 20:10). A noteworthy example of this is Kenyon's belief that Luke 12:5 ("Fear the one who, after killing, has authority to throw into hell") is a call to fear not God but Satan.⁹ Thus, when Jesus 'goes' to hell, he is entering Satan's territory and at Satan's mercy (or lack of it). This aspect of the dualism has an impact on the discussion not only in this chapter but also in the next.

5.2.2 Satan's sinful nature

Turning now to Satan's 'nature', Kenyon used the latter word in the context under consideration in synonymy with 'substance', 'being', and 'character'.¹⁰ He seemed thereby to mean 'all that an entity inwardly and innately is'. In assuming this sense, he leant on Ephesians 2:3 ("we were by nature children of wrath").¹¹ However, in the immediate contexts of divine and satanic natures, he also wrote in an almost personifying way, for instance that, "Spiritual death is in reality a Nature," adding in apparent synonymy that, "Spiritual Death is as much a substance, a force, a fact, as life."¹² Here, he seemed to envisage 'nature', if divine or satanic, as a substantial force having an impact on, presumably, the entity 'partaking' of it.

Kenyon noted that Satan's nature changed when he rebelled against God. Since then, his "nature is the very opposite of God's", "the very fountain of all that is evil, wicked, and corrupt in the human," "malignant... evil, unjust, and destructive."¹³ The best way to perceive the satanic nature was through Satan's names, as Kenyon understood them from the Bible. These included 'accuser', 'defamer', 'slanderer', 'corrupter', tempter', 'seducer', 'murderer', and 'liar'.¹⁴ "Out of Satan's nature comes [*sic*] hatred, murder, lust, and every unclean and evil force in the world."¹⁵ It is difficult to perceive any distinction in Kenyon's writing between the meanings of the terms 'satanic nature' and 'sin nature'.

⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.62.

¹⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.47, 57, 64.

¹¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.33, *Father*, p.53.

¹² Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.28, 30; cf. p.37; *Father*, p.50.

¹³ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.47 (x2), 57.

¹⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.64-68.

¹⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.47; cf. pp.50; 64-68.

Hagin understood Satan's nature similarly. 'Nature' he used in apparent synonymity with 'characteristics', and stated that, "The nature of the devil is hatred and lies."¹⁶ Copeland, in rather circular fashion, simply defines Satan's nature as spiritual death, stating elsewhere that Satan's nature is 'sin'.¹⁷

5.3 Partaking of a sinful, satanic nature

5.3.1 Kenyon's view

A key term for Kenyon was 'partaking' of the satanic nature.¹⁸ His adoption of the term may well have sprung, by way of contrast, from the statement in 2 Peter 1:4 that redeemed humans might be "partakers of the divine nature" (KJV, *et al*). For Kenyon, Satan's nature, like God's, is communicable to humanity. In fact, humans are so dependent on a 'higher' spiritual force that they cannot exist without participating in either God's or Satan's nature.¹⁹ This is a mutually exclusive choice, and not a mere claim that an individual could reflect certain aspects of the image of God while also exhibiting certain behavioural traits of Satan: "It would have been an unthinkable crime for the Nature of God and the nature of Satan to have been united in one individual."²⁰ Adam, created to participate in God's nature, began instead to participate in Satan's when he fell into sin. Whether participation in the divine nature and participation in the satanic nature were equivalent in their degree and effect is less than clear. Participation in the divine nature was not so great that Adam was divine *rather than* human before the fall: "He did not have God's nature. He had perfect human nature. He had perfect human life." It might thus charitably, and seemingly reasonably, be assumed that Adam did not become satanic *rather than* human after the fall. Nevertheless, the words quoted immediately above are surrounded by the following:

Satan breathed into Adam his own nature. Adam was actually born again in the Garden... Into his spirit, Satan now poured his own nature. Man instantly became a liar, a cringing, cowardly being. That nature has been reproduced in the human race down through the ages.²¹

¹⁶ Hagin, *Name*, p.31; cf. *Birth*, p.10.

¹⁷ Copeland, *Covenant*, pp.9-10; *What Happened*, side 2.

¹⁸ Kenyon used the phrase frequently with reference to humanity's fall (e.g. *Father*, pp.37, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51; *Bible*, pp.30, 33), but also applied it to Christ (e.g. *Father*, p.137).

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.28.

²⁰ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.34.

²¹ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.60.

The profound and intrinsic character of the participation in Satan's nature that these words reveal is confirmed elsewhere: "Man commits Sin, because his Nature produces that kind of conduct."²² Kenyon may simply have meant here 'fallen nature' by "Nature", but given the tenor of his writing, it is also possible that he meant to indicate that fallen humanity was such a full participator in Satan's nature that this satanic nature was now humanity's own.²³

Turning now from Adam to Jesus, "as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness Jesus was also lifted up a serpent; that is, He was a partaker of Satanic Nature, the old Serpent."²⁴ Whether, for Kenyon, Christ's partaking in Satan's nature meant quite the same as Adam's partaking in it is a matter to be explored (see below, here and in §5.4). His view of substitution, in which Christ underwent what humanity suffered when it fell, in order that humanity might thus be redeemed, might suggest that it was the same. On the other hand, Kenyon's descriptions of Christ do not overtly state or even imply that Christ, while 'spiritually dead', was at enmity with God, a liar or a coward, unlike Adam.

In order to consider what Kenyon meant by 'partaking' when specifically applied to Christ, it is helpful to note some of his other relevant language. He wrote, for instance, that Jesus' "spirit absolutely became impregnated with the sin nature of the world."²⁵ This continues to suggest large synonymity between 'Satanic nature' and 'sin nature' (see §5.2.2), but his use of the word 'impregnated' also suggests that Kenyon's use of 'partake' was not a reference merely to an extrinsic 'fellowship with', but rather suggests an intrinsic alteration in, or at least adulteration of, the nature of Christ. A similar conclusion is suggested by the words 'one' 'united' and 'all' in: "He became one with Satan when He became sin"; "Jesus knew He was going to be lifted up, united with the Adversary"; "The sin-nature itself was laid upon Him, until He became all that spiritual death had made man."²⁶ It is thus reasonable to

²² Kenyon, *Father*, p.50.

²³ This is the understanding offered by McConnell (*Promise*, p.118).

²⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, p.137.

²⁵ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.63.

²⁶ E. W. Kenyon, *Identification: A Romance in Redemption* (Los Angeles, CA: E. W. Kenyon, 1941), p.21; *What Happened*, pp.44-45; *Bible*, p.165.

conclude that when Kenyon used the language of identification, he did not only mean that Christ was ‘counted’ as one of the fallen human race, but that He became, intrinsically, what humans had become, without committing actual sin.

While the weight of the evidence points, then, to an *intrinsic* ‘partaking’ of the Satanic nature in Christ while He suffered, occasionally Kenyon used more externally orientated language: “Here we see God taking our sin nature, hideous spiritual death, and making it to strike, as the Prophet says, upon His soul.”²⁷ Lie speculates that Kenyon may have meant to indicate no more by writing of a ‘partaking’ in Satan’s nature than a recognition that both Christ and Satan must experience hell: “Does union with the enemy refer to the fact that both the devil and Jesus himself will have to suffer in the pit of hell, albeit the adversary sometime in the future?”²⁸ This speculation, however, does not cohere with Kenyon’s overall portrayal. Whatever precisely Kenyon meant, he was indicating something more intrinsic than simply an experience common to the two.

The lack of clarity concerning how intrinsic Christ’s participation in Satan’s nature was means that a second uncertainty has emerged: not only is it unclear whether Adam partook in Satan’s nature to such an extent that this nature was his own, but also whether Jesus partook in Satan’s nature to the same extent that Adam did. No firm answers to these questions are offered. On the one hand, Kenyon insisted that Christ was a full substitute for fallen humanity. On the other hand, Christ’s partaking of the satanic nature did not involve the enmity with God that it did for Adam.

5.3.2 Hagin’s and Copeland’s views

When one turns from Kenyon’s writing to the more recent output of Hagin and Copeland, it quickly becomes clear that they do not refer to this aspect of spiritual death with anything like the frequency that Kenyon did.

²⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.125.

²⁸ Lie, ‘Theology’, p.100.

Hagin believed precisely the same things that Kenyon did regarding fallen Adam's partaking of the satanic nature.²⁹ In contrast to Kenyon, however, Hagin stopped short of overtly using the phrase 'partaking of Satan's nature' when referring to Christ on the cross. This seems to have been a deliberate choice, and initially suggests divergence from Kenyon's ideas. In fact Hagin, when asked his precise view by Hanegraaff, replied, "I don't believe that Jesus took on Satan's nature."³⁰ However, both Hanegraaff and Bowman are cautious about accepting Hagin's disavowal. Hanegraaff writes, "It becomes very confusing indeed when someone denies the very thing he affirms".³¹ This is slightly misleading, for Hagin did not state in so many words that Christ took on Satan's nature. Bowman is more nuanced:

We ought, of course, to take Hagin at his word that he finds such a way of expressing his teaching somehow unacceptable. On the other hand, we should not assume too quickly that Hagin disagrees with the *idea* expressed by saying that Jesus took on Satan's nature.³²

Bowman's accurate thinking is confirmed by Hagin's explicit statements that Christ's suffering involved His taking "upon Himself our sin nature, the nature of spiritual death" and "He took our spiritual death... our outlawed nature".³³ These show that his concepts did not differ substantially from those of Kenyon, for he had made it abundantly clear that 'our' sinful, outlawed nature was that of Satan.³⁴ At no point did he seek to distinguish *semantically* between 'satanic nature', 'sin nature' as applied to fallen humanity, and 'sin nature' as applied to the 'spiritually dead' Christ.

For Copeland, fallen human participation in Satan's nature, and the identity of this concept with 'spiritual death', emerges in such statements as

When Adam committed high treason against God and bowed his knee to Satan, spiritual death – the nature of Satan – was lodged in his heart. Actually, Adam

²⁹ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10. It is conceivable that Hagin's attitude altered, though minimally, between the publication of the first edition of *Redeemed* in 1966 and the publication of the second edition in 1983. The first edition has, in bold type, "Spiritual death means separation from God" (p.28). This is 'mirrored', effectively as a subheading, by the statement, also in bold, "Spiritual death means having Satan's nature" (p.29). In the 1983 edition, though the former statement is retained (now in italics; p.59), the latter is removed. However, the removal of this quasi-subheading is not reflecting by any extensive alteration of the text. A fallen human still "is spiritually a child of the devil, and he partakes of his father's nature" (pp.60-61 of 2nd edn; p.29 of 1st edn).

³⁰ Hagin, correspondence with Hanegraaff, quoted in Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161, and, more briefly, in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.156.

³¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.157.

³² Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.167-168, italics original.

³³ Hagin, *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.64; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

³⁴ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10; *Redeemed*, 2nd edn pp.60-61; *Name*, p.31.

was the first person ever to be born again. He was born from life unto death, from spiritual life unto spiritual death... God said that Adam would die the very day he ate the forbidden fruit, yet he lived several hundred years longer. God was not referring to physical death; He meant that Adam would die spiritually – that he would take on the nature of Satan which is spiritual death.³⁵

He further describes this ‘lodging in the heart’ and ‘taking on’ of Satan’s nature as a “union between Satan and mankind.”³⁶

Copeland repeats Kenyon’s and Hagin’s references to ‘sin nature’, but does not repeat Hagin’s reticence in ascribing participation in Satan’s nature to the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ. When Jesus suffered humanity’s ‘spiritual death’, Copeland writes, “He was made to be our sinfulness so that we could be made His righteousness”, “When Jesus went to the cross, He not only bore the penalty for our sinful conduct, He bore sin itself. He took on Himself the sin nature and every manifestation of death and destruction it carries with it”, “Man is a partaker of satanic nature due to the fall; Jesus bore that nature” and, expounding John 3:14, “the serpent denote[s] union and harmony with the nature of the Adversary.”³⁷ His preaching also explicitly links the sin nature to Satan: Christ “accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit.”³⁸

5.3.3 Conclusion to §5.3

§5.3 has analysed that aspect of JDS teaching which proposes that in his ‘spiritual death’ Jesus partook of a sinful, satanic nature. It has been shown that Kenyon taught this most fully and unambiguously, though even his exposition created two significant uncertainties: did Adam partake in Satan’s nature to the extent that this nature was intrinsically his, and did Jesus partake of this nature to the same extent as Adam? These uncertainties create further ones: how intrinsic to his being was Christ’s participation in this alleged satanic nature, and what effect on his being did this have?

Hagin, it has been seen, explicitly denied teaching that Christ partook of Satan’s nature. He did teach that Christ took an outlawed sin nature, and in practice made no distinction between it and the satanic nature that Adam had allegedly inherited at his

³⁵ Copeland, *Covenant*, pp.9-10.

³⁶ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.11; cf. ‘Great Exchange’, p.5.

³⁷ Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, p.24; ‘Worthy’, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3 (x2).

³⁸ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

fall. Copeland represents a return to Kenyon's more outspoken language. In both writing and preaching, Copeland explicitly relates Christ's 'spiritual death' to the nature of the devil. Neither Hagin nor Copeland, in the varied ways that each approaches this subject, dispels the uncertainties created by Kenyon.

5.4 The responses of the critics

A number of characterisations and criticisms are offered by the critics introduced in §§1.5-1.8. This aspect of JDS teaching is characterised by some as presenting Christ as "demonic", or "a demoniac".³⁹ While discussion about any possible differences between the concepts 'satanic' and 'demonic' lies beyond the limits of this thesis, it is nevertheless necessary to point out that the *term* Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland always use is 'satanic', not 'demonic'. The change in term thus presents at least the possibility of misrepresenting the concept.

The Christ of JDS teaching is also characterised as a 'new satanic creation'. McConnell introduces this term, and is followed by Perriman.⁴⁰ McConnell cites both Kenyon and Hagin in his relevant endnote. However, the two passages McConnell refers to are about Adam, not Christ. The extent to which Christ's experience exactly mirrors Adam's in JDS teaching is a moot point (see §5.3).

Turning now to the criticisms, some are banal and require no comment. Hanegraaff worries about whether Satan must have become the recipient of Christ's prayers when the latter cried 'Father' from the cross (Luke 23:34).⁴¹ Dal Bello opines that Christ himself would by JDS reckoning have needed a saviour.⁴² Others are more thoughtful and require consideration.

Of these, one criticism comments that to state that Christ partook of the satanic nature is necessarily to imply that Christ committed actual sin. Thus according to McConnell and dal Bello, the Christ of JDS teaching, while on the cross, was "sinful", for

³⁹ Brandon, *Health*, p.126; McConnell, *Promise*, p.120; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.155, 160; Smail, Walker and Wright, 'Revelation Knowledge', p.69.

⁴⁰ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.118, 120; Perriman, *Faith*, pp.24-25.

⁴¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.160-161.

⁴² dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.6.

Brandon, he was a “sinner”, for Perriman he was “inherently sinful”, and for McCann, he was “obedient to Satan.”⁴³ Bowman is a lone voice in this respect. He recognises that JDS teachers “mean that Jesus took on a sinful nature, the nature of Satan, so that somehow Jesus himself, without committing any sin (as we may gratefully acknowledge the Word-Faith teachers to recognize), comes to have the character of sin.”⁴⁴ That Bowman’s greater caution is justified will emerge in the next few paragraphs.

The critics’ rejoinder is consistently to point out that Old Testament sacrifices of which Christ’s is seen to be an echo involved blemish-free animals, and that the New Testament in turn presents Christ as a ‘lamb without blemish or spot’.⁴⁵ This argument seems to ignore the state of sacrificial animals – and Christ – during the process of killing. However physically blemish-free they were beforehand, they certainly were marred as the knife, nails or spear entered the body.

The rejoinder also fails to acknowledge the recognition of JDS teaching that Christ was indeed sinless.⁴⁶ Dal Bello criticises Copeland for being contradictory when the latter states that Christ was spotless when he went to the cross, but accepted Satan’s sin-nature when he hung there.⁴⁷ It is not self-evident that this understanding is contradictory. Christ’s being could have undergone some sort of change. Nevertheless, Kenyon had taught not only that Christ was sinless during his earthly ministry, but also that he was sinless while separated from God and taken to hell by Satan.⁴⁸ It may be that Copeland’s teaching here contradicts not his own, but

⁴³ McConnell, *Promise*, p.127; dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.6; Brandon, *Health*, p.126; Perriman, *Faith*, p.110; Vincent McCann, ‘An Evaluation of the Key Doctrines in the Health and Wealth Faith Movement’ (1998), accessed 25.9.03 from www.spotlightministries.org.uk/faithmov.htm.

⁴⁴ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.169.

⁴⁵ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.158; Brandon, *Health*, p.126; McConnell, *Promise*, p.127; Perriman, *Faith*, p.110; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.69. References are made to Leviticus 4:3, 23, 28, 32; 6:25-29; Deuteronomy 15:21; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 3:18.

⁴⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.123-124; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, ch.1 (implied in his logic); Copeland, ‘Power’, p.5.

⁴⁷ Dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.7.

⁴⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.119, 130, 136. As Lie accurately observes (Lie, ‘Theology’, p.100, italics original):

Kenyon emphasises *suffering* as the essential nature of Jesus’ three days and nights in hell, and does *not* say that Jesus’ alleged spiritual death caused any demonic hatred to flow from the spirit of Jesus. He also does not suggest that Jesus mentally agreed to or identified with the activities of

Kenyon's. However, it remains less than certain that Copeland, any more than Kenyon, conceived of Christ as one who committed actual sin when he partook of the satanic nature.

A second important criticism is that for Christ to have partaken of the satanic nature, he must either thereby have ceased to be divine,⁴⁹ or have exhibited a blend of divine and satanic natures.⁵⁰ The latter criticism presents an idea that Kenyon had in fact earlier rejected, at least with reference to Adam,⁵¹ and which seems foreign to Hagin's and Copeland's presentations, with their focus on Jesus' separation from God (see §4.2). The former criticism requires fuller response, and it is at this point that a particular weakness in JDS teaching emerges, for Christ's participation with sin and Satan, while separate from God the Father, is presented in such intrinsic terms (see §5.3) that the crucified Christ does indeed seem to be presented in ways which do not support his divinity. As noted above, Kenyon firmly excluded the idea that Adam could partake of the divine nature and the satanic nature simultaneously. What of Christ? Did his participation in the satanic nature compromise the divine nature that was intrinsic to his incarnate person? Question marks are thus raised not only about JDS teaching's understanding of the cross, but also about its incarnational Christology.

While it might charitably be assumed that Christ's divine nature, as understood by JDS doctrine, was entirely intrinsic to his person, there is a suspicion that Christ partook of the divine nature in somewhat more extrinsic ways, commensurate only with both Adam's pre-fall partaking of the divine nature, and Christ's own accursed partaking of the satanic nature. Thus, the uniqueness of the incarnation, and in turn of Christ's person, is not clearly maintained in this portrayal. This Christology thus seems to exhibit adoptionistic tendencies. If this suspicion is true, it serves to explain

the adversary. In this sense Kenyon gives no evidence of any transformation of the spiritual nature of Jesus.

⁴⁹ Perriman, *Faith*, p.22 ("transformation from a divine to a satanic creature"); Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161 ("implication": "rarely if ever stated explicitly"); Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.155 ("transformation from a divine being into a demoniac"); Hanegraaff and de Castro, 'What's Wrong? Part Two', p.7 ("Copeland tacitly admits that Jesus completely lost His deity").

⁵⁰ Dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.7.

⁵¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.34.

the ready freedom with which these authors regard Christians as “as much an Incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth.”⁵² It must, however, be noted that these tendencies are not carried through to their logical conclusions. Kenyon effectively denied adoptionism,⁵³ and when other aspects of Christ’s incarnate life are portrayed, Kenyon *et al* reveal a Christology that is firmly ‘from above’: “God was manifest in the flesh. God lived as a man among us and we know His nature.”⁵⁴ If anything, JDS Christology resembles Apollinarianism more than it does adoptionism (see §1.4.4). Furthermore, Kenyon did *not* write that Christ ‘partook’ of the divine nature during his incarnate life. This terminological distinction might, in the final analysis, reveal an unconscious distinction between the extents to which Christ was divine in his life and satanic in his death, and thus an underlying acknowledgement that Christ continued to be divine *in himself* while nevertheless partaking in some unexplained way in the satanic nature.

A third criticism is the stark one, stated by Bowman and by Smail, Walker and Wright, and implied by others, that JDS teaching at this point is simply without biblical support.⁵⁵ This requires considerable further discussion, and §§5.5.2 to 5.5.4 will be devoted to this.

In conclusion to §5.4, JDS teaching’s critics raise three significant objections to the belief that Christ partook of a sinful satanic nature. The first is the weakest. This is that Christ must thereby have sinned. This represents an inaccurate reading of JDS teaching. The critics’ response also presents an overly superficial reading of the Bible concerning the process of biblical sacrifice. The second is much more robust. It is that Christ must thereby have ceased to be divine. The uncertainties that emerged in §5.3 concerning precisely how Christ’s partaking of a sinful satanic nature is to be construed make it impossible to offer a definitive assessment of Christ’s continuing divinity while ‘spiritually dead’. The uncertainty that exists is matched by a similar one concerning the participation of the human Christ in the divine nature.

⁵² Kenyon, *Father*, p.100; cf. Hagin, *Zoe*, p.42, and §§1.4.4; 1.4.9.

⁵³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.98.

⁵⁴ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.158; cf. Hagin, *Zoe*, p.39; Copeland, ‘Taking An Offense’, p.5.

⁵⁵ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.168-169; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.69.

Adoptionistic tendencies exist. The third is that there is no biblical warrant for this thinking. This third criticism will be considered in detail in the next section.

5.5 Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's sources

As with all their theology, these three authors regard the Bible as teaching their views. It is with few exceptions the only source they explicitly cite. However, Hagin's and Copeland's likely dependence on Kenyon has already been discussed (§§1.3.2; 1.3.3; 1.6.3; 2.4.1). In turn, McConnell claims that Kenyon was dependent on New Thought and Christian Science for his 'spiritualisation' of Christ's death.⁵⁶ §5.5.1 will therefore consider the extent to which Kenyon, and through him Hagin and Copeland, might have been influenced by sources that Christian tradition would regard as 'heterodox', before §§5.5.2 to 5.5.4 discuss those biblical passages which stand out as central to their understanding.

5.5.1 Kenyon's possible implicit sources

A cursory reading of McConnell's work might give the impression that Kenyon gained all his more controversial ideas about Christ's death from New Thought and Christian Science sources. However, it has become apparent in earlier chapters that Kenyon was more indebted to Higher Life and Faith Cure authors for his views on the atonement as he was to New Thought or Christian Science. Concerning this chapter's focus, it can simply be noted that *neither* relevant Higher Life and Faith Cure *nor* possible New Thought and Christian Science sources referred to Christ's partaking of a sinful, satanic nature. Even the author who wrote most explicitly about Jesus 'dying spiritually', Henry C. Mabie (see §3.3.2), did not even hint that Christ related closely to Satan in the process. He did write of Jesus' "vicarious union with the guilty human race" and that Jesus "became as it were sin itself",⁵⁷ but although he referred to Satan in his works, he did not correlate Satan with this guilt or sin. Perhaps the greatest terminological similarity is to be found in the writing of A. B. Simpson, who claimed that the snakes referred to in Numbers 21 represented Satan, and then employed the same logic as does Copeland (see §5.5.4):

⁵⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120.

⁵⁷ Mabie, *Death*, pp.39, 42.

There was also in that brazen serpent the thought of Christ made sin for us, Christ assuming the vile and dishonoured name of sinful man, and counted by God, and treated by men, as if He were indeed a serpent and a criminal. Thus for us has He taken the sting from Satan.⁵⁸

Even here, however, the thought that Christ was “counted by God... as if He were ... a serpent”, while relating Christ in some tangential and implicit way to Satan, falls far short of stating overtly that Christ partook of Satan’s nature.

In the absence of any reference at all among these sources to the crucified Christ’s partaking with, union with or impregnation by the satanic nature, the only point of note relevant to the discussion is that New Thought and Christian Science were essentially monistic.⁵⁹ The New Thought and Christian Science authors introduced in §2.5.1 (P. P. Quimby; Ralph Waldo Emerson; Mary Baker Eddy; Ralph Waldo Trine) did not give Satan anything like the attention offered by Kenyon. Quimby mentioned the devil very occasionally, regarding it/him as identical with ignorance or error.⁶⁰ Eddy, though she did refer to “the personification of evil”, denied the existence of a personal devil.⁶¹ On the other hand, Higher Life and Faith Cure were far more dualistic: some of their writers introduced in §2.5.2 mentioned Satan, the devil, demons, or ‘spiritual enemies’ with some frequency, though admittedly they did so without the degree of attention offered by Kenyon.⁶²

A terminological link does emerge, however, between Trine and Kenyon over use of the word ‘partaker’. Trine frequently used this term to refer to humanity’s

⁵⁸ Simpson, *Gospel of Healing*, p.101; cf. p.29.

⁵⁹ Michael York, *The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), pp.167-168: “This worldview of the mental-spiritual as the sole reality – one composed only of goodness and light – is part of the Swedenborgian/New Thought and Eastern monistic heritages of the New Age.”

⁶⁰ Dresser, *Quimby Manuscripts*, ch.14; Phineas P. Quimby, ‘Questions and Answers’ (n.d.), accessed 12.5.06 from http://www.ppquimby.com/sub/articles/questions_and_answers.htm.

⁶¹ Eddy, *Science*, p.103 (cf. p.357), 469; *No and Yes*, pp.19, 27-30.

⁶² E.g. Gordon, *Behold He Cometh*, pp.99-100, 103, 118-120, 141-142, 152-154, 174; Mabie, *Death*, pp.5, 41; Montgomery, *Prayer*, pp.18, 26, 66, 68, 92; Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All* (London: Oliphants Ltd., 1960 [1894]), p.96; *The Power of the Blood of Jesus and the Blood of the Cross* (ET London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1935, 1951 [n.d.]), p.169; A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit or Power from On High Volume II* (New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1896), pp.176, 248, 269; *Gospel of Healing*, pp.28, 78, 86, 99, 101; *Holy Spirit Vol.I*, p.133; *Standing*, pp.49, 67, 78, 97; Hannah W. Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming A. Revell Company, 1952 [n.d.]), pp.97, 122, 124; Torrey, *Fulness of Power*, p.40; Watson, *Coals of Fire*, p.108; *Our Own God*, p.143.

relationship to ‘divinity’.⁶³ It is conceivable that his use influenced Kenyon. However, 2 Peter 1:4 is likely to be the primary influence on Kenyon, and possibly on Trine as well.

5.5.2 Biblical source material – fallen humanity

Kenyon’s thinking on this subject began with humanity’s fall. Adam’s partaking of the satanic nature, as a result of his disobedience, was however stated with neither biblical material nor logical deduction to support it.⁶⁴ Kenyon seemed to believe that he had plentiful biblical undergirding to his views:

It is very clear that when Spiritual Death entered the life of Adam, his spirit underwent a complete change. Man was actually born again when he sinned. He was born of Satan. He became a partaker of satanic nature. He became a child of Satan. Read 1 John 3:12, John 5:24, 1 John 3:14-15, and Ephesians 2:1-5. Spiritual Death, this hideous monster, seized the sovereignty, the dominion, the lordship over creation.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the texts he listed, while referring to human sin, the agency of ‘the prince of the power of the air’ in its genesis, ‘spiritual’ death, and even ‘nature’ do not indicate any human ‘partaking of Satan’s nature’ in these phenomena. Likewise, Hagin offered no direct scriptural evidence for his assertion that, “When Adam and Eve listened to the devil, the devil became their spiritual father and they had the devil’s nature in their spirits.” He observed that Cain killed Abel, but did not manage to ascertain that this event was evidence not only of moral failure, but of participation in Satan’s nature.⁶⁶

John 8:44 (ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ) indicated to Kenyon and Hagin that fallen humanity imbibed Satan’s nature, for “the father ... has given man his nature.”⁶⁷ It is true that here Jesus is given to say that his interlocutors exhibited some of Satan’s characteristics (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν). Insufficient evidence is provided in this brief passage, however, to conclude that the

⁶³ Trine, *Tune*, pp.xiv, 4, 29, 75; e.g. p.xiv: “All are partakers and individual expressions of the One Life.”

⁶⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.35-38; *Bible*, pp.25-29

⁶⁵ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.30, paragraph breaks removed.

⁶⁶ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10.

⁶⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p. 62; cf. pp.41, 63; *What Happened*, pp.60-61; Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10; *Man On Three Dimensions*, p.29.

whole of fallen humanity shares in Satan's characteristics to the extent that Kenyon and Hagin believed.

5.5.3 Biblical source material - 2 Corinthians 5:21

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς
γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ

“him who knew no sin he made sin for us, that we might become the
righteousness of God in him.”

Turning from any postulated participation in a satanic nature by fallen humanity to that alleged participation by Christ, Kenyon leant firmly on 2 Corinthians 5:21. This verse is often quoted, referred to, or alluded to by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland,⁶⁸ and most especially by Kenyon. For him, it offered direct evidence that Jesus partook of the satanic nature, or of “the sin-nature itself.”⁶⁹ Similarly for Copeland, 2 Corinthians 5:21 offers evidence that Jesus “accepted the sin nature of Satan”, “was made to be our sinfulness”, and “was so literally made sin in spirit that He had to be made righteous in spirit again.”⁷⁰ Hagin was more cautious in his vocabulary. 2 Corinthians 5:21 indicated to him that Jesus took “our outlawed nature.”⁷¹

Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland do not offer any extended exegesis of the text, but simply accept that it teaches that Christ participated in, became, or took sin, that such sin can be regarded as a ‘nature’ and that for Kenyon and Copeland at least this nature characterises or emanates from Satan. All three conclusions are controversial, and will now be considered. With regard to the first, that Christ became sin, commentators fall into two overall groups. While some believe that Paul meant that Christ ‘became sin’ (which in turn is necessarily understood in some metaphorical

⁶⁸ E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.47, 159, 165, 220; *Blood Covenant*, p.38; *Father*, pp.137, 222; *Jesus the Healer*, pp.9, 26, 36, 57, 63, 67; *Presence*, pp.54, 56; *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.37; *What Happened*, pp.14, 20, 43, 63, 130, 158; Hagin, *In Him*, p.17; *Name*, pp.31, 56; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, pp.5, 6, 24; *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.2; ‘Know the Glory’, p.6; *What Happened*, side 2; ‘Great Exchange’, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

⁶⁹ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.20 (cf. *Bible*, p.220); *Bible*, p.165.

⁷⁰ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; *Force of Righteousness*, p.24; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

⁷¹ Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

sense, for a person cannot become a behaviour or moral quality), others declare that Paul meant that Christ became a sin-offering.

The latter view appeals to the dual meanings of the Hebrew words חַטָּאת and זֶבַח (each being capable of translation as ‘sin’ and ‘sin-offering’, depending on context⁷²) as a possible background to Paul’s expression here, to Romans 8:3 (“as a sin offering”; RSV margin) and to Isaiah 53:10.⁷³ The former interpretation is not without difficulty: ‘sin’ must be understood metaphorically as some sort of personification of a quality or a state, but it is not clear what the personification is. Harris lists three options: ‘sinner’, ‘sin-bearer’, and ‘sin’, preferring the last.⁷⁴ Whichever is the case, this interpretation, despite its difficulties, is perhaps preferable to ‘sin-offering’, in that it makes fuller use of the internal logic of substitution, representation or exchange that Paul seemed to be employing.⁷⁵ For the sake of the present discussion, it will tentatively be accepted, for it is clearly the starting point for the JDS understanding of the verse.

Accepting, then, that Paul might have meant that Christ became ‘sin’, rather than a ‘sin-offering’, this still does not allow the logical leap of JDS teaching that Christ thereby partook in some ‘nature’. An understanding of Paul’s metaphorical sense intended through the terse phrase that Christ ‘was made sin’ emerges from the immediate context. ‘Sin’ is clearly contrasted here with ‘righteousness’, and more specifically the righteousness of God (5:21b⁷⁶) that ‘we’⁷⁷ are enabled to become through Christ’s being made sin. The cluster of ideas characterising this righteousness

⁷² R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Volume 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp.79, 278.

⁷³ E.g. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, pp.140, 157; F. F. Bruce, *I & II Corinthians* (NCBC. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971), p.210; Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians* (INTC. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p.159.

⁷⁴ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), p.453.

⁷⁵ See Dunn, *Theology*, pp.222-223; Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp.454-455; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), p.180; Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians Volume I* (ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), pp.439-442.

⁷⁶ All references in this section are to 2 Corinthians unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁷ ‘We’ in 5:21 might refer narrowly to Paul the author and those people who share with him in the ambassadorial ministry of reconciliation (5:20), or more broadly (or co-extensively?) to anyone who is in Christ (5:17).

can be clearly seen from the preceding sentences.⁷⁸ Those who have become the righteousness of God are those who, being in Christ, live for him (5:15), in newness of life (5:17) and in reconciled friendship with God (5:18), as their sins are no longer counted against them (5:19). In short, they are treated as if they had not in fact sinned.

The contrast that is implied between ‘our’ becoming righteousness and Christ being made sin suggests, then, that the latter phrase is to be understood as Christ’s being treated as if he had sinned. As Paul referred to Christ’s death at 5:14-15, and linked this to 5:21 with references to ‘for all’ (5:14, 15) and ‘for us’ (5:21), it is a safe conclusion that Paul understood this to have happened in the circumstances of Christ’s death.⁷⁹ Certainly, his death was portrayed in all four gospel accounts as one in which he was treated by people as if he had sinned – it was for alleged crimes that he was arrested, tried and executed under the legal provisions of the time (whatever the extent to which those rules were bent in the process). How familiar Paul was with such accounts when he wrote 2 Corinthians is an open question. Even in the chapter under investigation, he denied knowing Christ “according to the flesh” (5:16). However, what he meant by this was not that he chose to ignore Christ’s human history,⁸⁰ a history to which he did make brief reference elsewhere in his correspondence with this church (1 Corinthians 2:2; 7:10; 11:23-25; 15:3-7; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 4:10; 8:9; 13:4). He knew well that Christ suffered in his dying (4:8-10), and that this death was by crucifixion – reserved as an execution of criminals (13:4). So it is reasonable to suppose that Paul wished to indicate in 5:21 that Christ was treated in his dying as if he had sinned. Furthermore, he indicated that this was ultimately an act of God (5:21a; cf. 5:19). It may be going beyond the evidence here to declare that, for Paul, Christ was treated *by God as well as by humans* as if he had sinned.⁸¹ Nevertheless, what happened was not beyond God’s ultimate directorship.

⁷⁸ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p.158: “Phrases like ‘a new creation,’ ‘reconciliation,’ and ‘righteousness of God’ are all virtual synonyms.”

⁷⁹ So Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.452; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p.157; etc.

⁸⁰ Bruce, *Corinthians*, p.208: Paul was not “deprecating an interest in the Jesus of history as something improper.”

⁸¹ So Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.180: Christ “came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of wrath.”

The conclusion of the previous paragraph, that ‘he made Christ sin’ means that, under God’s ultimate direction, Christ was treated in his crucifixion as if he had sinned, may not be incompatible with the idea that Christ partook in the process in a ‘nature’, but it by no means requires such a conclusion. Given that Paul’s reasoning elsewhere about Christ’s death reveals no participation in some alleged ‘nature’ of sin, there is no reason to reach this conclusion in exegeting 5:21. It is not even at all certain that an idea of a sin ‘nature’ is necessary in this discussion or in exegeting Paul.

Similarly, the idea that Christ related in some way to Satan and/or his nature in his crucifixion is not incompatible with Christ being treated as if he had sinned, but neither is it necessitated by it. There are three ‘players in the drama’ summed up in 5:21: God, Christ, and ‘us’. Satan is firmly ‘off-stage’. He makes a number of appearances in 2 Corinthians (2:11; 11:14; 12:7; cf. 4:4; 6:15), and is clearly portrayed thereby as an enemy of Christ and his people. That he might therefore have played some causative part in Christ’s death is not implausible.⁸² The difficulty for the JDS reading of 5:21 is that this verse simply does not state that such was the case, still less that Satan in some way transferred all or some of his characteristics to Christ in the process.

5.5.4 Biblical source material - John 3:14

καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man
be lifted up...”

Kenyon’s and Copeland’s understandings of Christ’s partaking of the satanic nature further rest on Numbers 21:8 and the allusion to it in John 3:14. The thinking is explored most fully by Copeland:

Why do you think Moses, upon the instruction of God, raised a serpent upon that pole instead of a lamb? It used to bug me: I asked, “Why in the world did You ask to put that snake up there – the sign of Satan? Why didn’t You put a lamb on that

⁸² Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 2:8 will be discussed in §6.5.1.

pole?” The Lord said, “Because it was the sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross.”⁸³

Similar logic is apparent elsewhere: “The serpent was the likeness of the thing destroying the Israelites. Jesus became sin and died spiritually. The worm and the serpent denote union and harmony with the nature of the Adversary.”⁸⁴

In contrast to 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:14 offers a much more obvious possible association with Satan, in the form of the serpent. Kenyon and Copeland both implicitly rely upon the broad biblical association between Satan and snakes, from Genesis 3:1 to Revelation 12:9. Copeland does, however, offer further evidence that this link is appropriate in the case of John 3:14. He points out that in Numbers 21 the serpents from whose bites the Israelites needed to be rescued were the ‘plague’ destroying the Israelites.⁸⁵ This obviously brings Satan to Copeland’s mind, for Satan is the one destroying humans who need to be rescued from his clutches, and from the sin he incites them to commit.

However, the JDS reading of John 3:14 and Numbers 21:5-9 exhibits a number of significant weaknesses. In Numbers 21, the snakes are not at enmity with God, and are not associated causatively with Israel’s sin. Quite the opposite is true: the snakes are in fact *sent* by God, and serve to bring Israel’s sin *to an end*, either by killing the sinners (implied in Numbers 21:6) or by bringing about contrition (Numbers 21:7). Turning now to John 3:14, the degree of parallel that can legitimately be drawn between the details in the two passages must not be overestimated. It is possible that John 3:14 contains the words “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert” only for the reason that the crucifixion⁸⁶ and the story recorded in Numbers both involve the

⁸³ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2 (cf. Kenyon, *What Happened*, pp.44-45; *Father*, p.137). This excerpt is quoted by Onken (‘Atonement of Christ’; cf. its citation in Perriman, *Faith*, p.24) with small differences of individual words. Copeland is speaking fast at this point, and certain words are difficult to hear.

⁸⁴ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁸⁵ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁸⁶ In John 3:14, ὑψοῦν includes reference to the crucifixion, as the reference to Numbers 21 indicates, though it is likely also to refer to Christ’s resurrection and exaltation. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII* (AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), pp.145-146.

physical act of lifting something or someone up.⁸⁷ That said, if any parallel beyond this between the snakes of Numbers and the crucified Christ is to be drawn, it might follow the significance of the snakes in Numbers that was elucidated earlier in this paragraph. In other words, just as the snakes were *sent* by God (Numbers 21:6) to end a sin, and the lifted snake was provided by God's instruction to Moses (Numbers 21:8) to save from this divine judgement those who looked to it, so too Christ was *sent* by God (John 3:17) effectively *to end sin*: those who looked to him would be saved from divine judgement (John 3:15); conversely, those who refused to do so would receive divine judgement through his agency (John 3:18-19). If it is fair to draw this degree of significant parallel between the passages, then such a reading does not support that offered by JDS teaching. Insofar as Jesus was the 'serpent', he was not thus God's enemy, or participating in the nature of God's enemy. Rather, he was God's provision, to bring about salvation from or judgement for sin, depending on the response of people to him.

5.5.5 Conclusion to §5.5

Copeland and Hagin clearly drew on Kenyon, though Hagin drew back from his most outspoken avowals that Christ partook of a satanic nature. In turn, while Kenyon might have been influenced by both Higher Life and Faith Cure, and New Thought and Christian Science, the whole dualistic milieu of Higher Life and Faith Cure thinking, in which Satan often played a fairly prominent part in presentations of Christian thought and life, seems far closer to Kenyon's own scheme than does the largely monistic worldview of New Thought and Christian Science. However, no *direct* antecedents to Kenyon's thought have been found among those sources to which he was evidently or allegedly indebted in *either* Higher Life and Faith Cure *or* New Thought and Christian Science. The closest links were, from Faith Cure, A. B. Simpson, who offered some creative use of Numbers 21 and John 3:14, and from New Thought, Trine, who freely wrote of people being 'partakers'. Neither source, however, mirrored Kenyon's ideas at this point entirely. Kenyon seems to have reworked existing ideas quite extensively to create his own distinct thesis.

⁸⁷ So C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (2nd edn, London: SPCK, 1978 [1955]), p.214: "Later Christian writers... treat the serpent as a type of Christ..., but this is not, it seems, John's intention. For him the point of comparison is not the serpent but the lifting up."

Turning now to their use of biblical texts, it has emerged that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14 has offered the support to JDS teaching that the authors under review claim. The meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:21's reference to 'sin' is disputed. Even if it is not understood as 'sin-offering', it must be handled metaphorically, and seems to indicate that Christ was treated as if he had sinned, rather than that he partook of a 'sin nature', howsoever understood. John 3:14 may not perceive a close typological resemblance between Christ and the lifted serpent. If it does, the parallel drawn does not suggest that Christ related in some way to Satan while being crucified.

It must also be stressed that the exegesis of isolated 'proof-texts' is not a sufficient or satisfactory process in seeking to gain an appreciation of the New Testament's teaching on a theme. The whole tenor of the New Testament must be taken into account. Numerous passages throughout its canon record or interpret Christ's death. References to a sinful or satanic 'nature' in these passages are notable for their absence.⁸⁸

5.6 History of the tradition

The absence of references in the biblical witness to the crucified Christ partaking of a sinful or satanic nature, noted earlier in this chapter, is mirrored by a similar situation in the witness of historical atonement theology. While the conclusion should not be too hastily reached that JDS teaching at this point is 'heterodox' (for it might be that similar ideas are present, but that their parallels with JDS teaching are masked by terminological and even conceptual dissimilarities), theologians have not in fact written in any form of Christ taking on a satanic nature; nor have they referred to Christ's taking on a sin 'nature' in his crucifixion as such.

However, certain similarities do exist between the JDS perspective and that of a nineteenth century church leader who also attracted cries of 'heretic!': the flamboyant Church of Scotland minister, Edward Irving (1792-1834). Irving too opined that

⁸⁸ This is not to suggest that, according to the New Testament, Satan was completely uninvolved in the crucifixion. See discussion in §6.5.1.

Christ's nature was sinful. However, this was not a nature of which Christ only partook on the cross, in 'spiritual death'. Rather, it was that human nature which the Word assumed in the conception. While the human nature was fallen and 'sinful', the person of Christ was sinless, being kept from sin by the constant work of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹ That Christ's human nature was fallen from the time of conception until resurrection was important to Irving, a friend of McLeod Campbell,⁹⁰ because, somewhat in line with McLeod Campbell,⁹¹ Irving taught that the incarnation, at least as much as the cross, gained salvation for humanity. As McFarlane puts it: "There is not such great stress on the cross as on the entire life and filial obedience of the Son to the Father as a life of sacrifice."⁹² Christ's death was, in effect, the natural outworking of his incarnation "not to the unfallen but to the fallen, not to the sinless but sinful condition of the creature"; "in that nature which sinned, and which for sinning was accursed to death."⁹³

Several distinct similarities with JDS teaching can be traced (though no dependence is evident). First, for both, it was because of the sinful nature that Christ was mortal. In Irving's case, this nature and therefore this mortality was 'entered upon' at conception, while for JDS teaching Christ was physically immortal throughout his earthly life, only becoming physically mortal when he 'spiritually died' and partook of humanity's sin nature. A second similarity is that in both cases Satan is involved. In JDS teaching, the sin nature is the satanic nature (despite Hagin's protestations). For Irving, Christ "did bring His Divine person into death-possessed humanity... by the Fall brought into a state of... subjection to the devil."⁹⁴ However, the action of the Spirit on Irving's incarnate Christ keeps the latter from ever succumbing to the devil's temptations. In JDS teaching, Satan is master of the situation while Christ is 'spiritually dead' and partaking of his nature (as well as this chapter, see §6.2). A

⁸⁹ Edward Irving, *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord's Human Nature* (London: Baldwyn & Cradock, 1830), pp.vii-viii.

⁹⁰ Jim Purves, 'The Interaction of Christology and Pneumatology in the Soteriology of Edward Irving', pp.81-90, *Pneuma* 14.1 (Spring 1992), p.82.

⁹¹ Purves, 'Interaction', pp.85-86. Purves notes that Irving was not, however, as scathing as was McLeod Campbell of the notion of the propitiation of God's wrath.

⁹² Graham McFarlane, *Christ and the Spirit: The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), p.136.

⁹³ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, pp.102, 91.

⁹⁴ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, pp.2-3.

third similarity is the strong sense of identification or representation in both portrayals. According to Irving,

if Godhead in the person of the Son did not embrace our nature, as I and all men possess it, that nature, which I and all men possess, is not yet embraced by God. It is not stooped unto; it is not lifted up; it is not redeemed; it is not regenerated; it is not raised from the dead.⁹⁵

For JDS doctrine, Christ could not redeem humanity from ‘spiritual death’, including its involvement in Satan’s sin nature, without himself being ‘spiritually dead’ and imbued with the same sinful, satanic nature.

However, there are of course considerable contrasts, quite apart from the timescale that places the sinful nature in Christ throughout his earthly life for Irving, but only on the cross for JDS doctrine. First, the sinful nature which Irving envisaged in Christ was utterly integral to his incarnate person. On the other hand, as already discussed (§§5.3-5.4), there is ambiguity about the extent to which the sin nature in which the Christ of JDS teaching ‘partook’ was thereby genuinely his in the sense of becoming an aspect of his being, or whether it was merely something that he experienced or was somehow overcome by. Secondly, despite the similarity in terms, the sinful nature is not the same in both presentations. In JDS teaching, the sin nature of which Christ partook in his ‘spiritual death’ was that which unregenerate, ‘spiritually dead’ humanity also participates in. In contrast, for Irving, Christ’s sinful nature was that which regenerate people know: “We hold that it [Christ’s sinful human nature] received a Holy-Ghost life, a regenerate life, in the conception: in kind the same which we receive in regeneration, but in measure greater, because of His perfect faith.”⁹⁶

At this point, if Christ’s incarnate identification with fallen humanity is important to atonement,⁹⁷ then in one respect JDS teaching actually seems stronger than Irving’s, for though Irving wanted to believe that he and all humans were raised from death through Christ’s stooping to experience human mortality, Christ did *not*, by his

⁹⁵ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, p.114.

⁹⁶ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, p.vii.

⁹⁷ It is noteworthy that the belief that it is can be traced back to Irenaeus’ ‘recapitulation’ theory and Athanasius’ statements to the effect that Christ became what humans are that they might become what he is. See, e.g., Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.172, 378.

account, experience unregenerate human life. He therefore did not ‘stoop’ to experience that which needed to be regenerated. The Christ of JDS teaching, in contrast, did go through the experience, on the cross, of unregenerate ‘spiritual death’. In another respect, however, Irving’s Jesus identified more fully, for he knew mortality throughout the incarnation, while the JDS Jesus walked through life on the ‘cushion’ of immortality and unfallenness, only experiencing fallenness and physical mortality in his ‘spiritual death’ on the cross.⁹⁸

Turning now from the incarnation in general to the crucifixion in particular, voices have at times been raised to offer outspoken statements relating Christ to sin, even if not to Satan. Two famous examples will suffice to indicate that influential theologians have not been reticent to make this connection: Luther and Barth. Luther infamously declared that

All the prophets saw this, that Christ was to become the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world. He is not acting in His own Person now. Now He is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But He is a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and assaulter; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer and a murderer, and who caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Rom. 2:24). In short, He has and bears all the sins of all men in His body – not in the sense that He has committed them but in the sense that He took these sins, committed by us, upon His own body, in order to make satisfaction for them with His own blood.⁹⁹

Similarly, according to Barth, who declared clearly of Christ in his work on the cross, “In this place He is pure and spotless and sinless,”

He as One can represent all and *make Himself responsible for the sins of all* because He is very man, in our midst, one of us... He can conduct the case of God against us in such a way that He takes from us our own evil case, taking our place and *compromising and burdening Himself with it*.

* * * * *

His the sin which we commit on it; His the accusation, the judgment and the curse which necessarily fall on us there. *He is the unrighteous* amongst those who can no longer be so because He was and is for them. *He is the burdened* amongst those who have been freed from their burden by Him. *He is the condemned* amongst those who are pardoned because the sentence which destroys them is directed against Him.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ That Jesus, according to JDS teaching, only became physically mortal when he ‘died spiritually’ has already been noted (§§1.4.5-1.4.6). That his human nature was unfallen throughout his earthly life save for the cross is implicit throughout JDS teaching, but occasionally stated with reasonable clarity (e.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, p.165; Hagin, *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.64).

⁹⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* 1535 on 3:13 (*LW* 26, p.277).

¹⁰⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/1, pp.236-237, italics added.

In yet more flagrant language, Barth proceeded to write, in approval of Luther, that “He has made Himself a sinner for us... Our sin is no longer our own. It is His sin, the sin of Jesus Christ.” Christ is thus, in a repeated phrase of Barth’s, “the one great sinner.”¹⁰¹

One can perhaps ‘blame’ the apostle Paul for initiating such outspokenness, for these thoughts probably find their roots in 2 Corinthians 5:21, even more than in Galatians 3:13, which Luther was expounding when he wrote the words quoted above.¹⁰² A number of commentators on the text quote Bengel: “Who would have dared to speak thus, unless Paul had first led the way?”¹⁰³ Clearly, several have dared to speak thus.¹⁰⁴

An evaluation of the wisdom and usefulness of statements linking Christ to sin in this way lies beyond the limits of this thesis. All that is attempted here is an assessment of the extent to which JDS teaching coheres with or departs from influential traditional formulations. It has emerged that JDS teaching is neither alone in outspokenly ‘fusing’ Christ to sin, nor alone in demanding that such a fusion should be understood in terms of sin’s ‘nature’. However, the particular combination of these ideas set out in this chapter is unique to JDS doctrine, as is the particular way that Satan is seen to be involved in the process.

5.7 Chapter conclusions

5.7.1 Summary

This chapter has surveyed the unusual doctrine, inherent to JDS teaching, that Christ in his ‘spiritual death’ partook of a sinful, satanic nature. It has been shown that this idea was fashioned in the mind of Kenyon. He may have had seeds for his thoughts provided by some of the teaching, such as that of A. B. Simpson, emanating from the

¹⁰¹ Barth, *CD* IV/1, pp.238-239 (cf. pp.244, 254, 259).

¹⁰² 2 Corinthians 5:21 finds itself referred or alluded to in the works of Barth repeatedly (e.g. *CD* II/1, pp.398, 404; IV/1, pp.236, 241).

¹⁰³ Martin’s translation (2 *Corinthians*, p.158) of *Quis auderet sic loqui, nisi Paulus praeirir?* Cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.179.

¹⁰⁴ Similar outspokenness is to be seen in the commentaries, e.g. Erich Gräßer, *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002), p.233: “Der Sündlose als solcher... wurde zum *Sünder gemacht*” (italics original).

dualistic worldview of the Faith Cure movement. It is also possible that some of his language was provided, or at least spurred, by the teaching of R. W. Trine, an exponent of New Thought. Nevertheless, the precise fusion of language and ideas seems to have been his alone. The resultant scheme is reasonably clear, but does create a number of questions about the extent to which Jesus was, as Kenyon claimed, a full substitute for sinful Adam and his race. It has also emerged that both Hagin and Copeland have followed Kenyon in plentiful reference to ‘nature’ in this context, declaring with Kenyon that Christ took a sin nature in his ‘spiritual death’, though Hagin sought to retreat from referring to this nature as satanic.

In the debate that has been conducted so far concerning this doctrine, three main criticisms have been offered. The chapter has surveyed these, noting that there is reason to doubt the uniqueness of the person of Christ expressed in the Christology underlying JDS teaching at this point. §5.5 proceeded to consider the biblical material that JDS teachers call to their aid in expounding this teaching. It concluded that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14, nor indeed the whole tenor of the biblical witness, offers the support that the teachers under review claim of it. §5.6 considered ways in which the Christian tradition has linked Christ with sin and a sinful nature, noting the considerable contrasts that exist between JDS doctrine and even its superficially most similar equivalent: the teaching of Edward Irving.

5.7.2 Implications

As far as Christology is concerned, the greatest weakness in this part of JDS teaching is its inability to offer satisfactory answers to questions that are demanded by tensions between these teachers’ superficial allegiance to traditional incarnational Christology and their actual delineation of the events of the cross. There is contradiction in their teaching between on the one hand their insistence that Christ was a full substitute for Adam’s fallen ‘satanic’ state, and their recognition, clearest in Kenyon’s exposition, that Christ remained sinless while partaking of the satanic nature. There is also a considerable degree of uncertainty about what view of the incarnation underlies JDS teaching at this point. Did Christ in becoming ‘satanic’ cease to be divine? If so, had he previously only somehow associated with the divine nature, in adoptionistic terms,

as opposed to subsisting eternally in his divine nature, in traditional incarnational terms? Some of the explicit avowals of incarnational Christology made by JDS teachers are undermined by their exposition of this theme. In turn, the uniqueness of the JDS Christ is compromised.

These incarnational uncertainties also have implications for the atonement. Christianity, at least in its traditional incarnational forms, has long held that, for Christ's life and death to be of atoning significance, he had to be divine. This proviso held not just with reference to the whole of his human life on earth, but in particular to the events of the cross. The idea, implicit in the New Testament, has developed and flourished in the tradition, spurred by Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*,¹⁰⁵ and has been well expressed in the twentieth century by D. M. Baillie's *God Was In Christ*. For Baillie,

In short, 'it is *all* of God': the desire to forgive and reconcile, the appointing of means, the provision of the victim as it were from His own bosom at infinite cost. It all takes place within the very life of God Himself: for if we take the Christology of the New Testament at its highest we can only say that 'God was in Christ' in that great atoning sacrifice, and even that the Priest and the Victim both were none other than God.¹⁰⁶

It is less than clear that in the JDS scheme, the 'victim is none other than God'. If (and it is by no means certain) the divine nature of the incarnate Christ has been *replaced* by the satanic nature in his 'spiritual death', the provision is no longer from 'God's own bosom'. The cost is no longer 'infinite'. It may be, admittedly, that a form of atonement theory can still be built upon this portrayal of Christ's death, but it will not be that expressed by traditional incarnational Christianity. Alternatively, if Christ's divinity was maintained throughout his 'spiritual death', it is vital that JDS teaching in the future clarifies this, and declares how it is maintained.

Another potential implication for the atonement may be mentioned in passing at this point, in order to dismiss it. It might be assumed that the JDS depiction presents a Jesus who in his 'spiritual death' was not only no longer divine, but also no longer human, for he had been transformed, through his 'spiritual death', into an alien

¹⁰⁵ See discussion in Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, pp.352-353; L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920), pp.125-126, 135.

¹⁰⁶ Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, p.188.

satanic being. However, this would be an inaccurate construal of JDS teaching. The satanic nature that Jesus participated in during his ‘spiritual death’ was not a nature alien to humanity, but rather was the very nature that fallen unregenerate humanity has always known. As such, although there are certain ambiguities about the extent to which Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ was a full substitute of Adam’s, Jesus did not lose his humanity by ‘dying spiritually’, and so he was capable in this experience of playing a representative human role.

Turning finally to soteriology, a number of questions are raised by the findings of this chapter. In functional terms, for instance, how can a regenerate person (in other words, a partaker in the divine nature as opposed to the satanic nature, noting that for Kenyon at least these two natures cannot co-exist in an individual) be capable of any sin or even failure? Indeed, how can such a person, including the incarnate Christ, even be capable of experiencing genuine temptation? In ontological terms, is there any difference of nature between Christ and a Christian? The confusion that has been noted in this chapter about the extent to which the fallen Adam and the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ truly resemble each other stands as an analogy for similar confusion about the extent to which the ‘spiritually alive’ Christ resembles or differs from the regenerate Christian.¹⁰⁷

The fact that these and other similar questions can be posed does not in itself invalidate JDS teaching. It might be that they can be answered satisfactorily from within the JDS framework. Also, other interpretations of the accounts of Christ’s death are liable to their own sets of difficult questions. Nevertheless, unless and until such questions gain an appropriate response, wider Pentecostalism must remain sceptical of the claim that Jesus on the cross participated in a satanic nature. It is in making this claim that JDS teaching is at its weakest.

¹⁰⁷ Lie offers a similar criticism: “we look in vain for the biblical accentuation of the unique position of Christ as *God* over his spiritually redeemed creatures” (‘Theology’, pp.95-96, italics original).

5.7.3 Key observations

While JDS teaching's detractors exaggerate the difficulties lying within the doctrine's claim that Jesus while crucified was separated from God (see chapter 4), their criticisms of the assertion that he participated in the satanic nature carry more weight. In particular, their charge that the 'spiritually dead' Christ must thereby have ceased to be divine has force. The JDS presentations offer no firm assurance concerning either the continuing divinity of the crucified Christ or the uniqueness of the incarnation, and therefore of Christ's person.

Another key criticism of this aspect of JDS doctrine is its failure to offer an adequate biblical foundation. Its use of 2 Corinthians 5:21 and John 3:14 serves to illustrate both its reliance upon relatively few 'proof texts' and the waywardness of its exegesis when employing them.

5 Jesus' 'spiritual death' as partaking of a sinful, satanic nature

5.1 Introduction

JDS doctrine involves, with minor variations between the teachers, three central concepts. These are that in his 'spiritual death', Jesus was separated from God, partook of a sinful, satanic nature, and became Satan's prey. The first of these concepts was the focus of chapter 4. The third will occupy the attention of chapter 6. This chapter deals with the second: Jesus partook of Satan's sinful nature.

§§5.2 and 5.3 indicate the main features of the idea as taught by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland, and demonstrate some divergence between the three. §5.4 examines the responses made by a number of the critics introduced in §§1.5-1.8, and §5.5 focuses on the sources, including biblical ones, used by JDS teachers in forming their ideas. §5.6 discusses the extent to which JDS teaching in this respect departs from or adheres to traditional formulations concerning Christ's experiences on the cross. Finally, conclusions to the chapter will be offered in §5.7.

One of the difficulties facing the discussion presented in this chapter is that the authors under review do not at any point define 'nature'. Nor do they explicitly state whether exhibiting a 'satanic nature' involves merely 'sinfulness', a bondage to sinful tendencies, or whether in fact it means a more explicitly personal relationship with Satan. Hints are available in their writings, and are interacted with in this discussion, but the lack of overt definition does hinder the process.¹ It will emerge in early sections of this chapter that on this particular aspect of JDS teaching, Kenyon was the creative and detailed thinker. Hagin and Copeland are content to reproduce, with their own slight variations, Kenyon's views in much simpler and briefer fashion.

5.2 Satan

5.2.1 God-Satan dualism

The stark dualism between God and Satan that operates in JDS teaching has already been noted briefly (§1.4.1). Unsurprisingly, critics of JDS theology express concern about this portrayal of Satan. McConnell characterises the Word-faith view of the

¹ Bowman makes the same observation (*Controversy*, p.225).

atonement as ‘satanward’ rather than ‘godward’.² Hanegraaff devotes a whole chapter to what he calls the Word-faith movement’s ‘deification of Satan’.³ In fact, according to Hanegraaff, although “Faith teachers are not as blatantly dualistic as Zoroastrians and ancient Gnostics”,

Faith mythology features an implicit form of dualism: two forces fighting it out for control of the universe, and you never know who is finally going to win. If God had not caught Satan on a technicality, Jesus would have been doomed, humans would have been eternally lost, and Satan would have won the universe!⁴

Smail, Walker and Wright agree: Word-faith teaching displays metaphysical dualism in practice if not in theory.⁵

Despite Hanegraaff’s reference to Gnosticism, the form of dualism evinced by JDS teaching is not that in which spirit is good and matter is evil (though spirit is more important than matter; see §3.5.3). That such is the case is evidenced by the great concern of Word-faith teachers that Christians should receive *physical* healing.⁶ This dualism, while bearing vague resemblance to Zoroastrianism, is actually similar to the one found in the early church and its discussions about the atonement, in which God and Satan are at enmity with one another, and Satan can, temporarily, exercise certain powers in the human world. Some dualism of this sort is found in the New Testament, for instance in the synoptic accounts of Christ’s temptations. The dualism in Word-faith teaching is, admittedly, stark, and the number of references to Satan in JDS doctrine vast, but, as in much of the early church, the dualism is not absolute. Satan is created by God,⁷ and God has revealed that the victory is assuredly his.⁸

One way, however, in which the dualism of JDS doctrine clearly surpasses that of the New Testament is that in the former Satan is the lord of hell (contrast Matthew

² McConnell, *Promise*, p.125.

³ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, ch.11.

⁴ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.129-130.

⁵ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.64.

⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Jesus the Healer*; Hagin, *Redeemed*; Copeland, ‘Power’.

⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.57 (angel); Hagin, *Origin*, p.7 (creature); Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.6 (angel). In the early church, Origen’s dualism, in which “the creation had to be regarded as concomitant with the being of God and as eternally coexisting with him” (Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988], p.85) was effectively countered by Athanasius. See Torrance’s discussion in *Trinitarian Faith*, pp.84-86.

⁸ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, p.69-70; Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45; Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.6. JDS teaching places the victory solely in past atonement, without reference to an eschatological consummation of that victory.

25:41; Revelation 20:10). A noteworthy example of this is Kenyon's belief that Luke 12:5 ("Fear the one who, after killing, has authority to throw into hell") is a call to fear not God but Satan.⁹ Thus, when Jesus 'goes' to hell, he is entering Satan's territory and at Satan's mercy (or lack of it). This aspect of the dualism has an impact on the discussion not only in this chapter but also in the next.

5.2.2 Satan's sinful nature

Turning now to Satan's 'nature', Kenyon used the latter word in the context under consideration in synonymity with 'substance', 'being', and 'character'.¹⁰ He seemed thereby to mean 'all that an entity inwardly and innately is'. In assuming this sense, he leant on Ephesians 2:3 ("we were by nature children of wrath").¹¹ However, in the immediate contexts of divine and satanic natures, he also wrote in an almost personifying way, for instance that, "Spiritual death is in reality a Nature," adding in apparent synonymity that, "Spiritual Death is as much a substance, a force, a fact, as life."¹² Here, he seemed to envisage 'nature', if divine or satanic, as a substantial force having an impact on, presumably, the entity 'partaking' of it.

Kenyon noted that Satan's nature changed when he rebelled against God. Since then, his "nature is the very opposite of God's", "the very fountain of all that is evil, wicked, and corrupt in the human," "malignant... evil, unjust, and destructive."¹³ The best way to perceive the satanic nature was through Satan's names, as Kenyon understood them from the Bible. These included 'accuser', 'defamer', 'slanderer', 'corrupter', tempter', 'seducer', 'murderer', and 'liar'.¹⁴ "Out of Satan's nature comes [*sic*] hatred, murder, lust, and every unclean and evil force in the world."¹⁵ It is difficult to perceive any distinction in Kenyon's writing between the meanings of the terms 'satanic nature' and 'sin nature'.

⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.62.

¹⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.47, 57, 64.

¹¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.33, *Father*, p.53.

¹² Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.28, 30; cf. p.37; *Father*, p.50.

¹³ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.47 (x2), 57.

¹⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.64-68.

¹⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.47; cf. pp.50; 64-68.

Hagin understood Satan's nature similarly. 'Nature' he used in apparent synonymity with 'characteristics', and stated that, "The nature of the devil is hatred and lies."¹⁶ Copeland, in rather circular fashion, simply defines Satan's nature as spiritual death, stating elsewhere that Satan's nature is 'sin'.¹⁷

5.3 Partaking of a sinful, satanic nature

5.3.1 Kenyon's view

A key term for Kenyon was 'partaking' of the satanic nature.¹⁸ His adoption of the term may well have sprung, by way of contrast, from the statement in 2 Peter 1:4 that redeemed humans might be "partakers of the divine nature" (KJV, *et al*). For Kenyon, Satan's nature, like God's, is communicable to humanity. In fact, humans are so dependent on a 'higher' spiritual force that they cannot exist without participating in either God's or Satan's nature.¹⁹ This is a mutually exclusive choice, and not a mere claim that an individual could reflect certain aspects of the image of God while also exhibiting certain behavioural traits of Satan: "It would have been an unthinkable crime for the Nature of God and the nature of Satan to have been united in one individual."²⁰ Adam, created to participate in God's nature, began instead to participate in Satan's when he fell into sin. Whether participation in the divine nature and participation in the satanic nature were equivalent in their degree and effect is less than clear. Participation in the divine nature was not so great that Adam was divine *rather than* human before the fall: "He did not have God's nature. He had perfect human nature. He had perfect human life." It might thus charitably, and seemingly reasonably, be assumed that Adam did not become satanic *rather than* human after the fall. Nevertheless, the words quoted immediately above are surrounded by the following:

Satan breathed into Adam his own nature. Adam was actually born again in the Garden... Into his spirit, Satan now poured his own nature. Man instantly became a liar, a cringing, cowardly being. That nature has been reproduced in the human race down through the ages.²¹

¹⁶ Hagin, *Name*, p.31; cf. *Birth*, p.10.

¹⁷ Copeland, *Covenant*, pp.9-10; *What Happened*, side 2.

¹⁸ Kenyon used the phrase frequently with reference to humanity's fall (e.g. *Father*, pp.37, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51; *Bible*, pp.30, 33), but also applied it to Christ (e.g. *Father*, p.137).

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.28.

²⁰ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.34.

²¹ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.60.

The profound and intrinsic character of the participation in Satan's nature that these words reveal is confirmed elsewhere: "Man commits Sin, because his Nature produces that kind of conduct."²² Kenyon may simply have meant here 'fallen nature' by "Nature", but given the tenor of his writing, it is also possible that he meant to indicate that fallen humanity was such a full participator in Satan's nature that this satanic nature was now humanity's own.²³

Turning now from Adam to Jesus, "as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness Jesus was also lifted up a serpent; that is, He was a partaker of Satanic Nature, the old Serpent."²⁴ Whether, for Kenyon, Christ's partaking in Satan's nature meant quite the same as Adam's partaking in it is a matter to be explored (see below, here and in §5.4). His view of substitution, in which Christ underwent what humanity suffered when it fell, in order that humanity might thus be redeemed, might suggest that it was the same. On the other hand, Kenyon's descriptions of Christ do not overtly state or even imply that Christ, while 'spiritually dead', was at enmity with God, a liar or a coward, unlike Adam.

In order to consider what Kenyon meant by 'partaking' when specifically applied to Christ, it is helpful to note some of his other relevant language. He wrote, for instance, that Jesus' "spirit absolutely became impregnated with the sin nature of the world."²⁵ This continues to suggest large synonymity between 'Satanic nature' and 'sin nature' (see §5.2.2), but his use of the word 'impregnated' also suggests that Kenyon's use of 'partake' was not a reference merely to an extrinsic 'fellowship with', but rather suggests an intrinsic alteration in, or at least adulteration of, the nature of Christ. A similar conclusion is suggested by the words 'one' 'united' and 'all' in: "He became one with Satan when He became sin"; "Jesus knew He was going to be lifted up, united with the Adversary"; "The sin-nature itself was laid upon Him, until He became all that spiritual death had made man."²⁶ It is thus reasonable to

²² Kenyon, *Father*, p.50.

²³ This is the understanding offered by McConnell (*Promise*, p.118).

²⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, p.137.

²⁵ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.63.

²⁶ E. W. Kenyon, *Identification: A Romance in Redemption* (Los Angeles, CA: E. W. Kenyon, 1941), p.21; *What Happened*, pp.44-45; *Bible*, p.165.

conclude that when Kenyon used the language of identification, he did not only mean that Christ was ‘counted’ as one of the fallen human race, but that He became, intrinsically, what humans had become, without committing actual sin.

While the weight of the evidence points, then, to an *intrinsic* ‘partaking’ of the Satanic nature in Christ while He suffered, occasionally Kenyon used more externally orientated language: “Here we see God taking our sin nature, hideous spiritual death, and making it to strike, as the Prophet says, upon His soul.”²⁷ Lie speculates that Kenyon may have meant to indicate no more by writing of a ‘partaking’ in Satan’s nature than a recognition that both Christ and Satan must experience hell: “Does union with the enemy refer to the fact that both the devil and Jesus himself will have to suffer in the pit of hell, albeit the adversary sometime in the future?”²⁸ This speculation, however, does not cohere with Kenyon’s overall portrayal. Whatever precisely Kenyon meant, he was indicating something more intrinsic than simply an experience common to the two.

The lack of clarity concerning how intrinsic Christ’s participation in Satan’s nature was means that a second uncertainty has emerged: not only is it unclear whether Adam partook in Satan’s nature to such an extent that this nature was his own, but also whether Jesus partook in Satan’s nature to the same extent that Adam did. No firm answers to these questions are offered. On the one hand, Kenyon insisted that Christ was a full substitute for fallen humanity. On the other hand, Christ’s partaking of the satanic nature did not involve the enmity with God that it did for Adam.

5.3.2 Hagin’s and Copeland’s views

When one turns from Kenyon’s writing to the more recent output of Hagin and Copeland, it quickly becomes clear that they do not refer to this aspect of spiritual death with anything like the frequency that Kenyon did.

²⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.125.

²⁸ Lie, ‘Theology’, p.100.

Hagin believed precisely the same things that Kenyon did regarding fallen Adam's partaking of the satanic nature.²⁹ In contrast to Kenyon, however, Hagin stopped short of overtly using the phrase 'partaking of Satan's nature' when referring to Christ on the cross. This seems to have been a deliberate choice, and initially suggests divergence from Kenyon's ideas. In fact Hagin, when asked his precise view by Hanegraaff, replied, "I don't believe that Jesus took on Satan's nature."³⁰ However, both Hanegraaff and Bowman are cautious about accepting Hagin's disavowal. Hanegraaff writes, "It becomes very confusing indeed when someone denies the very thing he affirms".³¹ This is slightly misleading, for Hagin did not state in so many words that Christ took on Satan's nature. Bowman is more nuanced:

We ought, of course, to take Hagin at his word that he finds such a way of expressing his teaching somehow unacceptable. On the other hand, we should not assume too quickly that Hagin disagrees with the *idea* expressed by saying that Jesus took on Satan's nature.³²

Bowman's accurate thinking is confirmed by Hagin's explicit statements that Christ's suffering involved His taking "upon Himself our sin nature, the nature of spiritual death" and "He took our spiritual death... our outlawed nature".³³ These show that his concepts did not differ substantially from those of Kenyon, for he had made it abundantly clear that 'our' sinful, outlawed nature was that of Satan.³⁴ At no point did he seek to distinguish *semantically* between 'satanic nature', 'sin nature' as applied to fallen humanity, and 'sin nature' as applied to the 'spiritually dead' Christ.

For Copeland, fallen human participation in Satan's nature, and the identity of this concept with 'spiritual death', emerges in such statements as

When Adam committed high treason against God and bowed his knee to Satan, spiritual death – the nature of Satan – was lodged in his heart. Actually, Adam

²⁹ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10. It is conceivable that Hagin's attitude altered, though minimally, between the publication of the first edition of *Redeemed* in 1966 and the publication of the second edition in 1983. The first edition has, in bold type, "Spiritual death means separation from God" (p.28). This is 'mirrored', effectively as a subheading, by the statement, also in bold, "Spiritual death means having Satan's nature" (p.29). In the 1983 edition, though the former statement is retained (now in italics; p.59), the latter is removed. However, the removal of this quasi-subheading is not reflecting by any extensive alteration of the text. A fallen human still "is spiritually a child of the devil, and he partakes of his father's nature" (pp.60-61 of 2nd edn; p.29 of 1st edn).

³⁰ Hagin, correspondence with Hanegraaff, quoted in Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161, and, more briefly, in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.156.

³¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.157.

³² Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.167-168, italics original.

³³ Hagin, *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.64; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

³⁴ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10; *Redeemed*, 2nd edn pp.60-61; *Name*, p.31.

was the first person ever to be born again. He was born from life unto death, from spiritual life unto spiritual death... God said that Adam would die the very day he ate the forbidden fruit, yet he lived several hundred years longer. God was not referring to physical death; He meant that Adam would die spiritually – that he would take on the nature of Satan which is spiritual death.³⁵

He further describes this ‘lodging in the heart’ and ‘taking on’ of Satan’s nature as a “union between Satan and mankind.”³⁶

Copeland repeats Kenyon’s and Hagin’s references to ‘sin nature’, but does not repeat Hagin’s reticence in ascribing participation in Satan’s nature to the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ. When Jesus suffered humanity’s ‘spiritual death’, Copeland writes, “He was made to be our sinfulness so that we could be made His righteousness”, “When Jesus went to the cross, He not only bore the penalty for our sinful conduct, He bore sin itself. He took on Himself the sin nature and every manifestation of death and destruction it carries with it”, “Man is a partaker of satanic nature due to the fall; Jesus bore that nature” and, expounding John 3:14, “the serpent denote[s] union and harmony with the nature of the Adversary.”³⁷ His preaching also explicitly links the sin nature to Satan: Christ “accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit.”³⁸

5.3.3 Conclusion to §5.3

§5.3 has analysed that aspect of JDS teaching which proposes that in his ‘spiritual death’ Jesus partook of a sinful, satanic nature. It has been shown that Kenyon taught this most fully and unambiguously, though even his exposition created two significant uncertainties: did Adam partake in Satan’s nature to the extent that this nature was intrinsically his, and did Jesus partake of this nature to the same extent as Adam? These uncertainties create further ones: how intrinsic to his being was Christ’s participation in this alleged satanic nature, and what effect on his being did this have?

Hagin, it has been seen, explicitly denied teaching that Christ partook of Satan’s nature. He did teach that Christ took an outlawed sin nature, and in practice made no distinction between it and the satanic nature that Adam had allegedly inherited at his

³⁵ Copeland, *Covenant*, pp.9-10.

³⁶ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.11; cf. ‘Great Exchange’, p.5.

³⁷ Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, p.24; ‘Worthy’, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3 (x2).

³⁸ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2.

fall. Copeland represents a return to Kenyon's more outspoken language. In both writing and preaching, Copeland explicitly relates Christ's 'spiritual death' to the nature of the devil. Neither Hagin nor Copeland, in the varied ways that each approaches this subject, dispels the uncertainties created by Kenyon.

5.4 The responses of the critics

A number of characterisations and criticisms are offered by the critics introduced in §§1.5-1.8. This aspect of JDS teaching is characterised by some as presenting Christ as "demonic", or "a demoniac".³⁹ While discussion about any possible differences between the concepts 'satanic' and 'demonic' lies beyond the limits of this thesis, it is nevertheless necessary to point out that the *term* Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland always use is 'satanic', not 'demonic'. The change in term thus presents at least the possibility of misrepresenting the concept.

The Christ of JDS teaching is also characterised as a 'new satanic creation'. McConnell introduces this term, and is followed by Perriman.⁴⁰ McConnell cites both Kenyon and Hagin in his relevant endnote. However, the two passages McConnell refers to are about Adam, not Christ. The extent to which Christ's experience exactly mirrors Adam's in JDS teaching is a moot point (see §5.3).

Turning now to the criticisms, some are banal and require no comment. Hanegraaff worries about whether Satan must have become the recipient of Christ's prayers when the latter cried 'Father' from the cross (Luke 23:34).⁴¹ Dal Bello opines that Christ himself would by JDS reckoning have needed a saviour.⁴² Others are more thoughtful and require consideration.

Of these, one criticism comments that to state that Christ partook of the satanic nature is necessarily to imply that Christ committed actual sin. Thus according to McConnell and dal Bello, the Christ of JDS teaching, while on the cross, was "sinful", for

³⁹ Brandon, *Health*, p.126; McConnell, *Promise*, p.120; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.155, 160; Smail, Walker and Wright, 'Revelation Knowledge', p.69.

⁴⁰ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.118, 120; Perriman, *Faith*, pp.24-25.

⁴¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.160-161.

⁴² dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.6.

Brandon, he was a “sinner”, for Perriman he was “inherently sinful”, and for McCann, he was “obedient to Satan.”⁴³ Bowman is a lone voice in this respect. He recognises that JDS teachers “mean that Jesus took on a sinful nature, the nature of Satan, so that somehow Jesus himself, without committing any sin (as we may gratefully acknowledge the Word-Faith teachers to recognize), comes to have the character of sin.”⁴⁴ That Bowman’s greater caution is justified will emerge in the next few paragraphs.

The critics’ rejoinder is consistently to point out that Old Testament sacrifices of which Christ’s is seen to be an echo involved blemish-free animals, and that the New Testament in turn presents Christ as a ‘lamb without blemish or spot’.⁴⁵ This argument seems to ignore the state of sacrificial animals – and Christ – during the process of killing. However physically blemish-free they were beforehand, they certainly were marred as the knife, nails or spear entered the body.

The rejoinder also fails to acknowledge the recognition of JDS teaching that Christ was indeed sinless.⁴⁶ Dal Bello criticises Copeland for being contradictory when the latter states that Christ was spotless when he went to the cross, but accepted Satan’s sin-nature when he hung there.⁴⁷ It is not self-evident that this understanding is contradictory. Christ’s being could have undergone some sort of change. Nevertheless, Kenyon had taught not only that Christ was sinless during his earthly ministry, but also that he was sinless while separated from God and taken to hell by Satan.⁴⁸ It may be that Copeland’s teaching here contradicts not his own, but

⁴³ McConnell, *Promise*, p.127; dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.6; Brandon, *Health*, p.126; Perriman, *Faith*, p.110; Vincent McCann, ‘An Evaluation of the Key Doctrines in the Health and Wealth Faith Movement’ (1998), accessed 25.9.03 from www.spotlightministries.org.uk/faithmov.htm.

⁴⁴ Bowman, *Controversy*, p.169.

⁴⁵ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.158; Brandon, *Health*, p.126; McConnell, *Promise*, p.127; Perriman, *Faith*, p.110; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.69. References are made to Leviticus 4:3, 23, 28, 32; 6:25-29; Deuteronomy 15:21; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 3:18.

⁴⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.123-124; Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, ch.1 (implied in his logic); Copeland, ‘Power’, p.5.

⁴⁷ Dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.7.

⁴⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.119, 130, 136. As Lie accurately observes (Lie, ‘Theology’, p.100, italics original):

Kenyon emphasises *suffering* as the essential nature of Jesus’ three days and nights in hell, and does *not* say that Jesus’ alleged spiritual death caused any demonic hatred to flow from the spirit of Jesus. He also does not suggest that Jesus mentally agreed to or identified with the activities of

Kenyon's. However, it remains less than certain that Copeland, any more than Kenyon, conceived of Christ as one who committed actual sin when he partook of the satanic nature.

A second important criticism is that for Christ to have partaken of the satanic nature, he must either thereby have ceased to be divine,⁴⁹ or have exhibited a blend of divine and satanic natures.⁵⁰ The latter criticism presents an idea that Kenyon had in fact earlier rejected, at least with reference to Adam,⁵¹ and which seems foreign to Hagin's and Copeland's presentations, with their focus on Jesus' separation from God (see §4.2). The former criticism requires fuller response, and it is at this point that a particular weakness in JDS teaching emerges, for Christ's participation with sin and Satan, while separate from God the Father, is presented in such intrinsic terms (see §5.3) that the crucified Christ does indeed seem to be presented in ways which do not support his divinity. As noted above, Kenyon firmly excluded the idea that Adam could partake of the divine nature and the satanic nature simultaneously. What of Christ? Did his participation in the satanic nature compromise the divine nature that was intrinsic to his incarnate person? Question marks are thus raised not only about JDS teaching's understanding of the cross, but also about its incarnational Christology.

While it might charitably be assumed that Christ's divine nature, as understood by JDS doctrine, was entirely intrinsic to his person, there is a suspicion that Christ partook of the divine nature in somewhat more extrinsic ways, commensurate only with both Adam's pre-fall partaking of the divine nature, and Christ's own accursed partaking of the satanic nature. Thus, the uniqueness of the incarnation, and in turn of Christ's person, is not clearly maintained in this portrayal. This Christology thus seems to exhibit adoptionistic tendencies. If this suspicion is true, it serves to explain

the adversary. In this sense Kenyon gives no evidence of any transformation of the spiritual nature of Jesus.

⁴⁹ Perriman, *Faith*, p.22 ("transformation from a divine to a satanic creature"); Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161 ("implication": "rarely if ever stated explicitly"); Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.155 ("transformation from a divine being into a demoniac"); Hanegraaff and de Castro, 'What's Wrong? Part Two', p.7 ("Copeland tacitly admits that Jesus completely lost His deity").

⁵⁰ Dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.7.

⁵¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.34.

the ready freedom with which these authors regard Christians as “as much an Incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth.”⁵² It must, however, be noted that these tendencies are not carried through to their logical conclusions. Kenyon effectively denied adoptionism,⁵³ and when other aspects of Christ’s incarnate life are portrayed, Kenyon *et al* reveal a Christology that is firmly ‘from above’: “God was manifest in the flesh. God lived as a man among us and we know His nature.”⁵⁴ If anything, JDS Christology resembles Apollinarianism more than it does adoptionism (see §1.4.4). Furthermore, Kenyon did *not* write that Christ ‘partook’ of the divine nature during his incarnate life. This terminological distinction might, in the final analysis, reveal an unconscious distinction between the extents to which Christ was divine in his life and satanic in his death, and thus an underlying acknowledgement that Christ continued to be divine *in himself* while nevertheless partaking in some unexplained way in the satanic nature.

A third criticism is the stark one, stated by Bowman and by Smail, Walker and Wright, and implied by others, that JDS teaching at this point is simply without biblical support.⁵⁵ This requires considerable further discussion, and §§5.5.2 to 5.5.4 will be devoted to this.

In conclusion to §5.4, JDS teaching’s critics raise three significant objections to the belief that Christ partook of a sinful satanic nature. The first is the weakest. This is that Christ must thereby have sinned. This represents an inaccurate reading of JDS teaching. The critics’ response also presents an overly superficial reading of the Bible concerning the process of biblical sacrifice. The second is much more robust. It is that Christ must thereby have ceased to be divine. The uncertainties that emerged in §5.3 concerning precisely how Christ’s partaking of a sinful satanic nature is to be construed make it impossible to offer a definitive assessment of Christ’s continuing divinity while ‘spiritually dead’. The uncertainty that exists is matched by a similar one concerning the participation of the human Christ in the divine nature.

⁵² Kenyon, *Father*, p.100; cf. Hagin, *Zoe*, p.42, and §§1.4.4; 1.4.9.

⁵³ Kenyon, *Father*, p.98.

⁵⁴ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.158; cf. Hagin, *Zoe*, p.39; Copeland, ‘Taking An Offense’, p.5.

⁵⁵ Bowman, *Controversy*, pp.168-169; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.69.

Adoptionistic tendencies exist. The third is that there is no biblical warrant for this thinking. This third criticism will be considered in detail in the next section.

5.5 Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's sources

As with all their theology, these three authors regard the Bible as teaching their views. It is with few exceptions the only source they explicitly cite. However, Hagin's and Copeland's likely dependence on Kenyon has already been discussed (§§1.3.2; 1.3.3; 1.6.3; 2.4.1). In turn, McConnell claims that Kenyon was dependent on New Thought and Christian Science for his 'spiritualisation' of Christ's death.⁵⁶ §5.5.1 will therefore consider the extent to which Kenyon, and through him Hagin and Copeland, might have been influenced by sources that Christian tradition would regard as 'heterodox', before §§5.5.2 to 5.5.4 discuss those biblical passages which stand out as central to their understanding.

5.5.1 Kenyon's possible implicit sources

A cursory reading of McConnell's work might give the impression that Kenyon gained all his more controversial ideas about Christ's death from New Thought and Christian Science sources. However, it has become apparent in earlier chapters that Kenyon was more indebted to Higher Life and Faith Cure authors for his views on the atonement as he was to New Thought or Christian Science. Concerning this chapter's focus, it can simply be noted that *neither* relevant Higher Life and Faith Cure *nor* possible New Thought and Christian Science sources referred to Christ's partaking of a sinful, satanic nature. Even the author who wrote most explicitly about Jesus 'dying spiritually', Henry C. Mabie (see §3.3.2), did not even hint that Christ related closely to Satan in the process. He did write of Jesus' "vicarious union with the guilty human race" and that Jesus "became as it were sin itself",⁵⁷ but although he referred to Satan in his works, he did not correlate Satan with this guilt or sin. Perhaps the greatest terminological similarity is to be found in the writing of A. B. Simpson, who claimed that the snakes referred to in Numbers 21 represented Satan, and then employed the same logic as does Copeland (see §5.5.4):

⁵⁶ McConnell, *Promise*, p.120.

⁵⁷ Mabie, *Death*, pp.39, 42.

There was also in that brazen serpent the thought of Christ made sin for us, Christ assuming the vile and dishonoured name of sinful man, and counted by God, and treated by men, as if He were indeed a serpent and a criminal. Thus for us has He taken the sting from Satan.⁵⁸

Even here, however, the thought that Christ was “counted by God... as if He were ... a serpent”, while relating Christ in some tangential and implicit way to Satan, falls far short of stating overtly that Christ partook of Satan’s nature.

In the absence of any reference at all among these sources to the crucified Christ’s partaking with, union with or impregnation by the satanic nature, the only point of note relevant to the discussion is that New Thought and Christian Science were essentially monistic.⁵⁹ The New Thought and Christian Science authors introduced in §2.5.1 (P. P. Quimby; Ralph Waldo Emerson; Mary Baker Eddy; Ralph Waldo Trine) did not give Satan anything like the attention offered by Kenyon. Quimby mentioned the devil very occasionally, regarding it/him as identical with ignorance or error.⁶⁰ Eddy, though she did refer to “the personification of evil”, denied the existence of a personal devil.⁶¹ On the other hand, Higher Life and Faith Cure were far more dualistic: some of their writers introduced in §2.5.2 mentioned Satan, the devil, demons, or ‘spiritual enemies’ with some frequency, though admittedly they did so without the degree of attention offered by Kenyon.⁶²

A terminological link does emerge, however, between Trine and Kenyon over use of the word ‘partaker’. Trine frequently used this term to refer to humanity’s

⁵⁸ Simpson, *Gospel of Healing*, p.101; cf. p.29.

⁵⁹ Michael York, *The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), pp.167-168: “This worldview of the mental-spiritual as the sole reality – one composed only of goodness and light – is part of the Swedenborgian/New Thought and Eastern monistic heritages of the New Age.”

⁶⁰ Dresser, *Quimby Manuscripts*, ch.14; Phineas P. Quimby, ‘Questions and Answers’ (n.d.), accessed 12.5.06 from http://www.ppquimby.com/sub/articles/questions_and_answers.htm.

⁶¹ Eddy, *Science*, p.103 (cf. p.357), 469; *No and Yes*, pp.19, 27-30.

⁶² E.g. Gordon, *Behold He Cometh*, pp.99-100, 103, 118-120, 141-142, 152-154, 174; Mabie, *Death*, pp.5, 41; Montgomery, *Prayer*, pp.18, 26, 66, 68, 92; Andrew Murray, *The Holiest of All* (London: Oliphants Ltd., 1960 [1894]), p.96; *The Power of the Blood of Jesus and the Blood of the Cross* (ET London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1935, 1951 [n.d.]), p.169; A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit or Power from On High Volume II* (New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 1896), pp.176, 248, 269; *Gospel of Healing*, pp.28, 78, 86, 99, 101; *Holy Spirit Vol.I*, p.133; *Standing*, pp.49, 67, 78, 97; Hannah W. Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming A. Revell Company, 1952 [n.d.]), pp.97, 122, 124; Torrey, *Fulness of Power*, p.40; Watson, *Coals of Fire*, p.108; *Our Own God*, p.143.

relationship to ‘divinity’.⁶³ It is conceivable that his use influenced Kenyon. However, 2 Peter 1:4 is likely to be the primary influence on Kenyon, and possibly on Trine as well.

5.5.2 Biblical source material – fallen humanity

Kenyon’s thinking on this subject began with humanity’s fall. Adam’s partaking of the satanic nature, as a result of his disobedience, was however stated with neither biblical material nor logical deduction to support it.⁶⁴ Kenyon seemed to believe that he had plentiful biblical undergirding to his views:

It is very clear that when Spiritual Death entered the life of Adam, his spirit underwent a complete change. Man was actually born again when he sinned. He was born of Satan. He became a partaker of satanic nature. He became a child of Satan. Read 1 John 3:12, John 5:24, 1 John 3:14-15, and Ephesians 2:1-5. Spiritual Death, this hideous monster, seized the sovereignty, the dominion, the lordship over creation.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the texts he listed, while referring to human sin, the agency of ‘the prince of the power of the air’ in its genesis, ‘spiritual’ death, and even ‘nature’ do not indicate any human ‘partaking of Satan’s nature’ in these phenomena. Likewise, Hagin offered no direct scriptural evidence for his assertion that, “When Adam and Eve listened to the devil, the devil became their spiritual father and they had the devil’s nature in their spirits.” He observed that Cain killed Abel, but did not manage to ascertain that this event was evidence not only of moral failure, but of participation in Satan’s nature.⁶⁶

John 8:44 (ὁμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὲ) indicated to Kenyon and Hagin that fallen humanity imbibed Satan’s nature, for “the father ... has given man his nature.”⁶⁷ It is true that here Jesus is given to say that his interlocutors exhibited some of Satan’s characteristics (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν). Insufficient evidence is provided in this brief passage, however, to conclude that the

⁶³ Trine, *Tune*, pp.xiv, 4, 29, 75; e.g. p.xiv: “All are partakers and individual expressions of the One Life.”

⁶⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.35-38; *Bible*, pp.25-29

⁶⁵ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.30, paragraph breaks removed.

⁶⁶ Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10.

⁶⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p. 62; cf. pp.41, 63; *What Happened*, pp.60-61; Hagin, *New Birth*, p.10; *Man On Three Dimensions*, p.29.

whole of fallen humanity shares in Satan's characteristics to the extent that Kenyon and Hagin believed.

5.5.3 Biblical source material - 2 Corinthians 5:21

τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς
γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ

“him who knew no sin he made sin for us, that we might become the
righteousness of God in him.”

Turning from any postulated participation in a satanic nature by fallen humanity to that alleged participation by Christ, Kenyon leant firmly on 2 Corinthians 5:21. This verse is often quoted, referred to, or alluded to by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland,⁶⁸ and most especially by Kenyon. For him, it offered direct evidence that Jesus partook of the satanic nature, or of “the sin-nature itself.”⁶⁹ Similarly for Copeland, 2 Corinthians 5:21 offers evidence that Jesus “accepted the sin nature of Satan”, “was made to be our sinfulness”, and “was so literally made sin in spirit that He had to be made righteous in spirit again.”⁷⁰ Hagin was more cautious in his vocabulary. 2 Corinthians 5:21 indicated to him that Jesus took “our outlawed nature.”⁷¹

Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland do not offer any extended exegesis of the text, but simply accept that it teaches that Christ participated in, became, or took sin, that such sin can be regarded as a ‘nature’ and that for Kenyon and Copeland at least this nature characterises or emanates from Satan. All three conclusions are controversial, and will now be considered. With regard to the first, that Christ became sin, commentators fall into two overall groups. While some believe that Paul meant that Christ ‘became sin’ (which in turn is necessarily understood in some metaphorical

⁶⁸ E.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, pp.47, 159, 165, 220; *Blood Covenant*, p.38; *Father*, pp.137, 222; *Jesus the Healer*, pp.9, 26, 36, 57, 63, 67; *Presence*, pp.54, 56; *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.37; *What Happened*, pp.14, 20, 43, 63, 130, 158; Hagin, *In Him*, p.17; *Name*, pp.31, 56; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6; Copeland, *Force of Righteousness*, pp.5, 6, 24; *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.2; ‘Know the Glory’, p.6; *What Happened*, side 2; ‘Great Exchange’, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

⁶⁹ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.20 (cf. *Bible*, p.220); *Bible*, p.165.

⁷⁰ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; *Force of Righteousness*, p.24; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1.

⁷¹ Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, p.6.

sense, for a person cannot become a behaviour or moral quality), others declare that Paul meant that Christ became a sin-offering.

The latter view appeals to the dual meanings of the Hebrew words חַטָּאת and זֶבַח (each being capable of translation as ‘sin’ and ‘sin-offering’, depending on context⁷²) as a possible background to Paul’s expression here, to Romans 8:3 (“as a sin offering”; RSV margin) and to Isaiah 53:10.⁷³ The former interpretation is not without difficulty: ‘sin’ must be understood metaphorically as some sort of personification of a quality or a state, but it is not clear what the personification is. Harris lists three options: ‘sinner’, ‘sin-bearer’, and ‘sin’, preferring the last.⁷⁴ Whichever is the case, this interpretation, despite its difficulties, is perhaps preferable to ‘sin-offering’, in that it makes fuller use of the internal logic of substitution, representation or exchange that Paul seemed to be employing.⁷⁵ For the sake of the present discussion, it will tentatively be accepted, for it is clearly the starting point for the JDS understanding of the verse.

Accepting, then, that Paul might have meant that Christ became ‘sin’, rather than a ‘sin-offering’, this still does not allow the logical leap of JDS teaching that Christ thereby partook in some ‘nature’. An understanding of Paul’s metaphorical sense intended through the terse phrase that Christ ‘was made sin’ emerges from the immediate context. ‘Sin’ is clearly contrasted here with ‘righteousness’, and more specifically the righteousness of God (5:21b⁷⁶) that ‘we’⁷⁷ are enabled to become through Christ’s being made sin. The cluster of ideas characterising this righteousness

⁷² R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Volume 1 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), pp.79, 278.

⁷³ E.g. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, pp.140, 157; F. F. Bruce, *I & II Corinthians* (NCBC. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971), p.210; Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians* (INTC. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p.159.

⁷⁴ Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), p.453.

⁷⁵ See Dunn, *Theology*, pp.222-223; Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp.454-455; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (BNTC. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1973), p.180; Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians Volume I* (ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), pp.439-442.

⁷⁶ All references in this section are to 2 Corinthians unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁷ ‘We’ in 5:21 might refer narrowly to Paul the author and those people who share with him in the ambassadorial ministry of reconciliation (5:20), or more broadly (or co-extensively?) to anyone who is in Christ (5:17).

can be clearly seen from the preceding sentences.⁷⁸ Those who have become the righteousness of God are those who, being in Christ, live for him (5:15), in newness of life (5:17) and in reconciled friendship with God (5:18), as their sins are no longer counted against them (5:19). In short, they are treated as if they had not in fact sinned.

The contrast that is implied between ‘our’ becoming righteousness and Christ being made sin suggests, then, that the latter phrase is to be understood as Christ’s being treated as if he had sinned. As Paul referred to Christ’s death at 5:14-15, and linked this to 5:21 with references to ‘for all’ (5:14, 15) and ‘for us’ (5:21), it is a safe conclusion that Paul understood this to have happened in the circumstances of Christ’s death.⁷⁹ Certainly, his death was portrayed in all four gospel accounts as one in which he was treated by people as if he had sinned – it was for alleged crimes that he was arrested, tried and executed under the legal provisions of the time (whatever the extent to which those rules were bent in the process). How familiar Paul was with such accounts when he wrote 2 Corinthians is an open question. Even in the chapter under investigation, he denied knowing Christ “according to the flesh” (5:16). However, what he meant by this was not that he chose to ignore Christ’s human history,⁸⁰ a history to which he did make brief reference elsewhere in his correspondence with this church (1 Corinthians 2:2; 7:10; 11:23-25; 15:3-7; 2 Corinthians 1:5; 4:10; 8:9; 13:4). He knew well that Christ suffered in his dying (4:8-10), and that this death was by crucifixion – reserved as an execution of criminals (13:4). So it is reasonable to suppose that Paul wished to indicate in 5:21 that Christ was treated in his dying as if he had sinned. Furthermore, he indicated that this was ultimately an act of God (5:21a; cf. 5:19). It may be going beyond the evidence here to declare that, for Paul, Christ was treated *by God as well as by humans* as if he had sinned.⁸¹ Nevertheless, what happened was not beyond God’s ultimate directorship.

⁷⁸ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p.158: “Phrases like ‘a new creation,’ ‘reconciliation,’ and ‘righteousness of God’ are all virtual synonyms.”

⁷⁹ So Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.452; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p.157; etc.

⁸⁰ Bruce, *Corinthians*, p.208: Paul was not “deprecating an interest in the Jesus of history as something improper.”

⁸¹ So Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.180: Christ “came to stand in that relation with God which normally is the result of sin, estranged from God and the object of wrath.”

The conclusion of the previous paragraph, that ‘he made Christ sin’ means that, under God’s ultimate direction, Christ was treated in his crucifixion as if he had sinned, may not be incompatible with the idea that Christ partook in the process in a ‘nature’, but it by no means requires such a conclusion. Given that Paul’s reasoning elsewhere about Christ’s death reveals no participation in some alleged ‘nature’ of sin, there is no reason to reach this conclusion in exegeting 5:21. It is not even at all certain that an idea of a sin ‘nature’ is necessary in this discussion or in exegeting Paul.

Similarly, the idea that Christ related in some way to Satan and/or his nature in his crucifixion is not incompatible with Christ being treated as if he had sinned, but neither is it necessitated by it. There are three ‘players in the drama’ summed up in 5:21: God, Christ, and ‘us’. Satan is firmly ‘off-stage’. He makes a number of appearances in 2 Corinthians (2:11; 11:14; 12:7; cf. 4:4; 6:15), and is clearly portrayed thereby as an enemy of Christ and his people. That he might therefore have played some causative part in Christ’s death is not implausible.⁸² The difficulty for the JDS reading of 5:21 is that this verse simply does not state that such was the case, still less that Satan in some way transferred all or some of his characteristics to Christ in the process.

5.5.4 Biblical source material - John 3:14

καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man
be lifted up...”

Kenyon’s and Copeland’s understandings of Christ’s partaking of the satanic nature further rest on Numbers 21:8 and the allusion to it in John 3:14. The thinking is explored most fully by Copeland:

Why do you think Moses, upon the instruction of God, raised a serpent upon that pole instead of a lamb? It used to bug me: I asked, “Why in the world did You ask to put that snake up there – the sign of Satan? Why didn’t You put a lamb on that

⁸² Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 2:8 will be discussed in §6.5.1.

pole?” The Lord said, “Because it was the sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross.”⁸³

Similar logic is apparent elsewhere: “The serpent was the likeness of the thing destroying the Israelites. Jesus became sin and died spiritually. The worm and the serpent denote union and harmony with the nature of the Adversary.”⁸⁴

In contrast to 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:14 offers a much more obvious possible association with Satan, in the form of the serpent. Kenyon and Copeland both implicitly rely upon the broad biblical association between Satan and snakes, from Genesis 3:1 to Revelation 12:9. Copeland does, however, offer further evidence that this link is appropriate in the case of John 3:14. He points out that in Numbers 21 the serpents from whose bites the Israelites needed to be rescued were the ‘plague’ destroying the Israelites.⁸⁵ This obviously brings Satan to Copeland’s mind, for Satan is the one destroying humans who need to be rescued from his clutches, and from the sin he incites them to commit.

However, the JDS reading of John 3:14 and Numbers 21:5-9 exhibits a number of significant weaknesses. In Numbers 21, the snakes are not at enmity with God, and are not associated causatively with Israel’s sin. Quite the opposite is true: the snakes are in fact *sent* by God, and serve to bring Israel’s sin *to an end*, either by killing the sinners (implied in Numbers 21:6) or by bringing about contrition (Numbers 21:7). Turning now to John 3:14, the degree of parallel that can legitimately be drawn between the details in the two passages must not be overestimated. It is possible that John 3:14 contains the words “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert” only for the reason that the crucifixion⁸⁶ and the story recorded in Numbers both involve the

⁸³ Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2 (cf. Kenyon, *What Happened*, pp.44-45; *Father*, p.137). This excerpt is quoted by Onken (‘Atonement of Christ’; cf. its citation in Perriman, *Faith*, p.24) with small differences of individual words. Copeland is speaking fast at this point, and certain words are difficult to hear.

⁸⁴ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁸⁵ Copeland, *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3.

⁸⁶ In John 3:14, ὑψοῦν includes reference to the crucifixion, as the reference to Numbers 21 indicates, though it is likely also to refer to Christ’s resurrection and exaltation. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII* (AB. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), pp.145-146.

physical act of lifting something or someone up.⁸⁷ That said, if any parallel beyond this between the snakes of Numbers and the crucified Christ is to be drawn, it might follow the significance of the snakes in Numbers that was elucidated earlier in this paragraph. In other words, just as the snakes were *sent* by God (Numbers 21:6) to end a sin, and the lifted snake was provided by God's instruction to Moses (Numbers 21:8) to save from this divine judgement those who looked to it, so too Christ was *sent* by God (John 3:17) effectively *to end sin*: those who looked to him would be saved from divine judgement (John 3:15); conversely, those who refused to do so would receive divine judgement through his agency (John 3:18-19). If it is fair to draw this degree of significant parallel between the passages, then such a reading does not support that offered by JDS teaching. Insofar as Jesus was the 'serpent', he was not thus God's enemy, or participating in the nature of God's enemy. Rather, he was God's provision, to bring about salvation from or judgement for sin, depending on the response of people to him.

5.5.5 Conclusion to §5.5

Copeland and Hagin clearly drew on Kenyon, though Hagin drew back from his most outspoken avowals that Christ partook of a satanic nature. In turn, while Kenyon might have been influenced by both Higher Life and Faith Cure, and New Thought and Christian Science, the whole dualistic milieu of Higher Life and Faith Cure thinking, in which Satan often played a fairly prominent part in presentations of Christian thought and life, seems far closer to Kenyon's own scheme than does the largely monistic worldview of New Thought and Christian Science. However, no *direct* antecedents to Kenyon's thought have been found among those sources to which he was evidently or allegedly indebted in *either* Higher Life and Faith Cure *or* New Thought and Christian Science. The closest links were, from Faith Cure, A. B. Simpson, who offered some creative use of Numbers 21 and John 3:14, and from New Thought, Trine, who freely wrote of people being 'partakers'. Neither source, however, mirrored Kenyon's ideas at this point entirely. Kenyon seems to have reworked existing ideas quite extensively to create his own distinct thesis.

⁸⁷ So C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (2nd edn, London: SPCK, 1978 [1955]), p.214: "Later Christian writers... treat the serpent as a type of Christ..., but this is not, it seems, John's intention. For him the point of comparison is not the serpent but the lifting up."

Turning now to their use of biblical texts, it has emerged that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14 has offered the support to JDS teaching that the authors under review claim. The meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:21's reference to 'sin' is disputed. Even if it is not understood as 'sin-offering', it must be handled metaphorically, and seems to indicate that Christ was treated as if he had sinned, rather than that he partook of a 'sin nature', howsoever understood. John 3:14 may not perceive a close typological resemblance between Christ and the lifted serpent. If it does, the parallel drawn does not suggest that Christ related in some way to Satan while being crucified.

It must also be stressed that the exegesis of isolated 'proof-texts' is not a sufficient or satisfactory process in seeking to gain an appreciation of the New Testament's teaching on a theme. The whole tenor of the New Testament must be taken into account. Numerous passages throughout its canon record or interpret Christ's death. References to a sinful or satanic 'nature' in these passages are notable for their absence.⁸⁸

5.6 History of the tradition

The absence of references in the biblical witness to the crucified Christ partaking of a sinful or satanic nature, noted earlier in this chapter, is mirrored by a similar situation in the witness of historical atonement theology. While the conclusion should not be too hastily reached that JDS teaching at this point is 'heterodox' (for it might be that similar ideas are present, but that their parallels with JDS teaching are masked by terminological and even conceptual dissimilarities), theologians have not in fact written in any form of Christ taking on a satanic nature; nor have they referred to Christ's taking on a sin 'nature' in his crucifixion as such.

However, certain similarities do exist between the JDS perspective and that of a nineteenth century church leader who also attracted cries of 'heretic!': the flamboyant Church of Scotland minister, Edward Irving (1792-1834). Irving too opined that

⁸⁸ This is not to suggest that, according to the New Testament, Satan was completely uninvolved in the crucifixion. See discussion in §6.5.1.

Christ's nature was sinful. However, this was not a nature of which Christ only partook on the cross, in 'spiritual death'. Rather, it was that human nature which the Word assumed in the conception. While the human nature was fallen and 'sinful', the person of Christ was sinless, being kept from sin by the constant work of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹ That Christ's human nature was fallen from the time of conception until resurrection was important to Irving, a friend of McLeod Campbell,⁹⁰ because, somewhat in line with McLeod Campbell,⁹¹ Irving taught that the incarnation, at least as much as the cross, gained salvation for humanity. As McFarlane puts it: "There is not such great stress on the cross as on the entire life and filial obedience of the Son to the Father as a life of sacrifice."⁹² Christ's death was, in effect, the natural outworking of his incarnation "not to the unfallen but to the fallen, not to the sinless but sinful condition of the creature"; "in that nature which sinned, and which for sinning was accursed to death."⁹³

Several distinct similarities with JDS teaching can be traced (though no dependence is evident). First, for both, it was because of the sinful nature that Christ was mortal. In Irving's case, this nature and therefore this mortality was 'entered upon' at conception, while for JDS teaching Christ was physically immortal throughout his earthly life, only becoming physically mortal when he 'spiritually died' and partook of humanity's sin nature. A second similarity is that in both cases Satan is involved. In JDS teaching, the sin nature is the satanic nature (despite Hagin's protestations). For Irving, Christ "did bring His Divine person into death-possessed humanity... by the Fall brought into a state of... subjection to the devil."⁹⁴ However, the action of the Spirit on Irving's incarnate Christ keeps the latter from ever succumbing to the devil's temptations. In JDS teaching, Satan is master of the situation while Christ is 'spiritually dead' and partaking of his nature (as well as this chapter, see §6.2). A

⁸⁹ Edward Irving, *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of Our Lord's Human Nature* (London: Baldwyn & Cradock, 1830), pp.vii-viii.

⁹⁰ Jim Purves, 'The Interaction of Christology and Pneumatology in the Soteriology of Edward Irving', pp.81-90, *Pneuma* 14.1 (Spring 1992), p.82.

⁹¹ Purves, 'Interaction', pp.85-86. Purves notes that Irving was not, however, as scathing as was McLeod Campbell of the notion of the propitiation of God's wrath.

⁹² Graham McFarlane, *Christ and the Spirit: The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), p.136.

⁹³ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, pp.102, 91.

⁹⁴ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, pp.2-3.

third similarity is the strong sense of identification or representation in both portrayals. According to Irving,

if Godhead in the person of the Son did not embrace our nature, as I and all men possess it, that nature, which I and all men possess, is not yet embraced by God. It is not stooped unto; it is not lifted up; it is not redeemed; it is not regenerated; it is not raised from the dead.⁹⁵

For JDS doctrine, Christ could not redeem humanity from ‘spiritual death’, including its involvement in Satan’s sin nature, without himself being ‘spiritually dead’ and imbued with the same sinful, satanic nature.

However, there are of course considerable contrasts, quite apart from the timescale that places the sinful nature in Christ throughout his earthly life for Irving, but only on the cross for JDS doctrine. First, the sinful nature which Irving envisaged in Christ was utterly integral to his incarnate person. On the other hand, as already discussed (§§5.3-5.4), there is ambiguity about the extent to which the sin nature in which the Christ of JDS teaching ‘partook’ was thereby genuinely his in the sense of becoming an aspect of his being, or whether it was merely something that he experienced or was somehow overcome by. Secondly, despite the similarity in terms, the sinful nature is not the same in both presentations. In JDS teaching, the sin nature of which Christ partook in his ‘spiritual death’ was that which unregenerate, ‘spiritually dead’ humanity also participates in. In contrast, for Irving, Christ’s sinful nature was that which regenerate people know: “We hold that it [Christ’s sinful human nature] received a Holy-Ghost life, a regenerate life, in the conception: in kind the same which we receive in regeneration, but in measure greater, because of His perfect faith.”⁹⁶

At this point, if Christ’s incarnate identification with fallen humanity is important to atonement,⁹⁷ then in one respect JDS teaching actually seems stronger than Irving’s, for though Irving wanted to believe that he and all humans were raised from death through Christ’s stooping to experience human mortality, Christ did *not*, by his

⁹⁵ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, p.114.

⁹⁶ Irving, *Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine*, p.vii.

⁹⁷ It is noteworthy that the belief that it is can be traced back to Irenaeus’ ‘recapitulation’ theory and Athanasius’ statements to the effect that Christ became what humans are that they might become what he is. See, e.g., Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, pp.172, 378.

account, experience unregenerate human life. He therefore did not ‘stoop’ to experience that which needed to be regenerated. The Christ of JDS teaching, in contrast, did go through the experience, on the cross, of unregenerate ‘spiritual death’. In another respect, however, Irving’s Jesus identified more fully, for he knew mortality throughout the incarnation, while the JDS Jesus walked through life on the ‘cushion’ of immortality and unfallenness, only experiencing fallenness and physical mortality in his ‘spiritual death’ on the cross.⁹⁸

Turning now from the incarnation in general to the crucifixion in particular, voices have at times been raised to offer outspoken statements relating Christ to sin, even if not to Satan. Two famous examples will suffice to indicate that influential theologians have not been reticent to make this connection: Luther and Barth. Luther infamously declared that

All the prophets saw this, that Christ was to become the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world. He is not acting in His own Person now. Now He is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But He is a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and assaulter; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer and a murderer, and who caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Rom. 2:24). In short, He has and bears all the sins of all men in His body – not in the sense that He has committed them but in the sense that He took these sins, committed by us, upon His own body, in order to make satisfaction for them with His own blood.⁹⁹

Similarly, according to Barth, who declared clearly of Christ in his work on the cross, “In this place He is pure and spotless and sinless,”

He as One can represent all and *make Himself responsible for the sins of all* because He is very man, in our midst, one of us... He can conduct the case of God against us in such a way that He takes from us our own evil case, taking our place and *compromising and burdening Himself with it*.

* * * * *

His the sin which we commit on it; His the accusation, the judgment and the curse which necessarily fall on us there. *He is the unrighteous* amongst those who can no longer be so because He was and is for them. *He is the burdened* amongst those who have been freed from their burden by Him. *He is the condemned* amongst those who are pardoned because the sentence which destroys them is directed against Him.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ That Jesus, according to JDS teaching, only became physically mortal when he ‘died spiritually’ has already been noted (§§1.4.5-1.4.6). That his human nature was unfallen throughout his earthly life save for the cross is implicit throughout JDS teaching, but occasionally stated with reasonable clarity (e.g. Kenyon, *Bible*, p.165; Hagin, *Redeemed*, 2nd edn p.64).

⁹⁹ Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535* on 3:13 (*LW* 26, p.277).

¹⁰⁰ Barth, *CD IV/1*, pp.236-237, italics added.

In yet more flagrant language, Barth proceeded to write, in approval of Luther, that “He has made Himself a sinner for us... Our sin is no longer our own. It is His sin, the sin of Jesus Christ.” Christ is thus, in a repeated phrase of Barth’s, “the one great sinner.”¹⁰¹

One can perhaps ‘blame’ the apostle Paul for initiating such outspokenness, for these thoughts probably find their roots in 2 Corinthians 5:21, even more than in Galatians 3:13, which Luther was expounding when he wrote the words quoted above.¹⁰² A number of commentators on the text quote Bengel: “Who would have dared to speak thus, unless Paul had first led the way?”¹⁰³ Clearly, several have dared to speak thus.¹⁰⁴

An evaluation of the wisdom and usefulness of statements linking Christ to sin in this way lies beyond the limits of this thesis. All that is attempted here is an assessment of the extent to which JDS teaching coheres with or departs from influential traditional formulations. It has emerged that JDS teaching is neither alone in outspokenly ‘fusing’ Christ to sin, nor alone in demanding that such a fusion should be understood in terms of sin’s ‘nature’. However, the particular combination of these ideas set out in this chapter is unique to JDS doctrine, as is the particular way that Satan is seen to be involved in the process.

5.7 Chapter conclusions

5.7.1 Summary

This chapter has surveyed the unusual doctrine, inherent to JDS teaching, that Christ in his ‘spiritual death’ partook of a sinful, satanic nature. It has been shown that this idea was fashioned in the mind of Kenyon. He may have had seeds for his thoughts provided by some of the teaching, such as that of A. B. Simpson, emanating from the

¹⁰¹ Barth, *CD* IV/1, pp.238-239 (cf. pp.244, 254, 259).

¹⁰² 2 Corinthians 5:21 finds itself referred or alluded to in the works of Barth repeatedly (e.g. *CD* II/1, pp.398, 404; IV/1, pp.236, 241).

¹⁰³ Martin’s translation (2 *Corinthians*, p.158) of *Quis auderet sic loqui, nisi Paulus praeirir?* Cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p.179.

¹⁰⁴ Similar outspokenness is to be seen in the commentaries, e.g. Erich Gräßer, *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002), p.233: “Der Sündlose als solcher... wurde *zum Sünder gemacht*” (italics original).

dualistic worldview of the Faith Cure movement. It is also possible that some of his language was provided, or at least spurred, by the teaching of R. W. Trine, an exponent of New Thought. Nevertheless, the precise fusion of language and ideas seems to have been his alone. The resultant scheme is reasonably clear, but does create a number of questions about the extent to which Jesus was, as Kenyon claimed, a full substitute for sinful Adam and his race. It has also emerged that both Hagin and Copeland have followed Kenyon in plentiful reference to ‘nature’ in this context, declaring with Kenyon that Christ took a sin nature in his ‘spiritual death’, though Hagin sought to retreat from referring to this nature as satanic.

In the debate that has been conducted so far concerning this doctrine, three main criticisms have been offered. The chapter has surveyed these, noting that there is reason to doubt the uniqueness of the person of Christ expressed in the Christology underlying JDS teaching at this point. §5.5 proceeded to consider the biblical material that JDS teachers call to their aid in expounding this teaching. It concluded that neither 2 Corinthians 5:21 nor John 3:14, nor indeed the whole tenor of the biblical witness, offers the support that the teachers under review claim of it. §5.6 considered ways in which the Christian tradition has linked Christ with sin and a sinful nature, noting the considerable contrasts that exist between JDS doctrine and even its superficially most similar equivalent: the teaching of Edward Irving.

5.7.2 Implications

As far as Christology is concerned, the greatest weakness in this part of JDS teaching is its inability to offer satisfactory answers to questions that are demanded by tensions between these teachers’ superficial allegiance to traditional incarnational Christology and their actual delineation of the events of the cross. There is contradiction in their teaching between on the one hand their insistence that Christ was a full substitute for Adam’s fallen ‘satanic’ state, and their recognition, clearest in Kenyon’s exposition, that Christ remained sinless while partaking of the satanic nature. There is also a considerable degree of uncertainty about what view of the incarnation underlies JDS teaching at this point. Did Christ in becoming ‘satanic’ cease to be divine? If so, had he previously only somehow associated with the divine nature, in adoptionistic terms,

as opposed to subsisting eternally in his divine nature, in traditional incarnational terms? Some of the explicit avowals of incarnational Christology made by JDS teachers are undermined by their exposition of this theme. In turn, the uniqueness of the JDS Christ is compromised.

These incarnational uncertainties also have implications for the atonement. Christianity, at least in its traditional incarnational forms, has long held that, for Christ's life and death to be of atoning significance, he had to be divine. This proviso held not just with reference to the whole of his human life on earth, but in particular to the events of the cross. The idea, implicit in the New Testament, has developed and flourished in the tradition, spurred by Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?*,¹⁰⁵ and has been well expressed in the twentieth century by D. M. Baillie's *God Was In Christ*. For Baillie,

In short, 'it is *all* of God': the desire to forgive and reconcile, the appointing of means, the provision of the victim as it were from His own bosom at infinite cost. It all takes place within the very life of God Himself: for if we take the Christology of the New Testament at its highest we can only say that 'God was in Christ' in that great atoning sacrifice, and even that the Priest and the Victim both were none other than God.¹⁰⁶

It is less than clear that in the JDS scheme, the 'victim is none other than God'. If (and it is by no means certain) the divine nature of the incarnate Christ has been *replaced* by the satanic nature in his 'spiritual death', the provision is no longer from 'God's own bosom'. The cost is no longer 'infinite'. It may be, admittedly, that a form of atonement theory can still be built upon this portrayal of Christ's death, but it will not be that expressed by traditional incarnational Christianity. Alternatively, if Christ's divinity was maintained throughout his 'spiritual death', it is vital that JDS teaching in the future clarifies this, and declares how it is maintained.

Another potential implication for the atonement may be mentioned in passing at this point, in order to dismiss it. It might be assumed that the JDS depiction presents a Jesus who in his 'spiritual death' was not only no longer divine, but also no longer human, for he had been transformed, through his 'spiritual death', into an alien

¹⁰⁵ See discussion in Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, pp.352-353; L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920), pp.125-126, 135.

¹⁰⁶ Baillie, *God Was In Christ*, p.188.

satanic being. However, this would be an inaccurate construal of JDS teaching. The satanic nature that Jesus participated in during his ‘spiritual death’ was not a nature alien to humanity, but rather was the very nature that fallen unregenerate humanity has always known. As such, although there are certain ambiguities about the extent to which Jesus’ ‘spiritual death’ was a full substitute of Adam’s, Jesus did not lose his humanity by ‘dying spiritually’, and so he was capable in this experience of playing a representative human role.

Turning finally to soteriology, a number of questions are raised by the findings of this chapter. In functional terms, for instance, how can a regenerate person (in other words, a partaker in the divine nature as opposed to the satanic nature, noting that for Kenyon at least these two natures cannot co-exist in an individual) be capable of any sin or even failure? Indeed, how can such a person, including the incarnate Christ, even be capable of experiencing genuine temptation? In ontological terms, is there any difference of nature between Christ and a Christian? The confusion that has been noted in this chapter about the extent to which the fallen Adam and the ‘spiritually dead’ Christ truly resemble each other stands as an analogy for similar confusion about the extent to which the ‘spiritually alive’ Christ resembles or differs from the regenerate Christian.¹⁰⁷

The fact that these and other similar questions can be posed does not in itself invalidate JDS teaching. It might be that they can be answered satisfactorily from within the JDS framework. Also, other interpretations of the accounts of Christ’s death are liable to their own sets of difficult questions. Nevertheless, unless and until such questions gain an appropriate response, wider Pentecostalism must remain sceptical of the claim that Jesus on the cross participated in a satanic nature. It is in making this claim that JDS teaching is at its weakest.

¹⁰⁷ Lie offers a similar criticism: “we look in vain for the biblical accentuation of the unique position of Christ as *God* over his spiritually redeemed creatures” (‘Theology’, pp.95-96, italics original).

5.7.3 Key observations

While JDS teaching's detractors exaggerate the difficulties lying within the doctrine's claim that Jesus while crucified was separated from God (see chapter 4), their criticisms of the assertion that he participated in the satanic nature carry more weight. In particular, their charge that the 'spiritually dead' Christ must thereby have ceased to be divine has force. The JDS presentations offer no firm assurance concerning either the continuing divinity of the crucified Christ or the uniqueness of the incarnation, and therefore of Christ's person.

Another key criticism of this aspect of JDS doctrine is its failure to offer an adequate biblical foundation. Its use of 2 Corinthians 5:21 and John 3:14 serves to illustrate both its reliance upon relatively few 'proof texts' and the waywardness of its exegesis when employing them.

6 Jesus' 'spiritual death' as becoming Satan's prey

6.1 Introduction

According to JDS teaching, to state that Jesus 'died spiritually' necessarily involves three elements. The first is that Jesus was separated from God. This claim was assessed in chapter 4. The second is that Jesus participated in a sinful, satanic nature. This second concept gained the attention of chapter 5. The present chapter deals with the third element: in his 'spiritual death', Jesus became Satan's prey. Two aspects can be distinguished. They are Jesus' subjection to Satan's domination, and Jesus' suffering at Satan's hands. However, they closely intertwine. Satan is depicted in JDS teaching, unsurprisingly, as a cruel master. Therefore, being his subject necessarily involves suffering as a consequence. These aspects and their relationship will be apparent in this discussion.

The chapter first considers the views of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland (§6.2). It emerges in this section that Kenyon and Copeland hold similar views, while Hagin held back from fully accepting all aspects of the teaching. Thereafter, §6.3 discusses the responses to this aspect of JDS teaching that have been offered by its critics introduced in §§1.5-1.8. This involves a discussion of the possibility that JDS teachers see the atonement in terms of a ransom paid to Satan. Next, §6.4 reviews the possible sources Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland have used in developing their theories. §6.5 offers an alternative reading of Satan's conflict with Jesus. Finally, §6.6 offers overall conclusions to the chapter.

6.2 The views of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland

6.2.1 Kenyon's view

Kenyon regarded the 'spiritually dead' Christ as under Satan's rule.¹ This was not to suggest that Jesus became Satan's servant, or was required to perform Satan's sinful will.² Rather, Jesus was then the devil's victim, unprotected from Satan's cruelty.

¹ As well as his more extended treatment of the subject in *Father, Bible and What Happened*, Kenyon made brief references in, e.g., *Wonderful Name*, p.8; *Jesus the Healer*, p.26; *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.37; *Identification*, p.28.

² Note previous discussion (§§5.3-5.4) about Jesus' partaking of a sinful nature, and especially Lie's accurate comment, already quoted but worth repeating ('Theology', p.100, italics original):

Kenyon emphasises *suffering* as the essential nature of Jesus' three days and nights in hell, and does *not* say that Jesus' alleged spiritual death caused any demonic hatred to flow from the spirit

Kenyon overtly linked this satanic mastery with Jesus' 'spiritual death': "As long as He was spiritually dead, filled with sin, Satan ruled over Him."³ Concerning the causal relationship between the two, the implication of this statement, though mild, is that 'spiritual death' is the cause and Satan's mastery the result. The following tends to confirm this: "When He was made Sin, He was turned over by God to the Adversary... Satan became His master... His spirit was taken by the Adversary, and carried to the place where the sinner's spirit goes when he dies."⁴ In this temporary conquest, Satan, as the quotation above demonstrates, took Jesus to hell⁵ (Kenyon stated paradoxically elsewhere that God sent Jesus to hell⁶). In hell, Christ suffered under the oppression of the devil's armies: "It would seem as though the whole hosts of hell were upon him. He was going through agonies beyond words."⁷ Satan and his cohorts tormented Jesus while the claims of justice were being satisfied. Kenyon preached about "the Man hanging in defeat on the cross, carrying out the demands of justice... go[ing] down into hell bearing the torments of the damned until all hell shouted with glee. But out of the depths he arose and stood triumphant over death, hell and the grave."⁸ Once this was over, the roles were reversed. God caused Jesus once more to be 'spiritually alive', 'born again', and in this new life Jesus now conquered Satan.⁹ After this was complete, Jesus physically rose from the dead.

Kenyon's reasons for his understanding went back to his view of humanity's creation and fall into sin, already described briefly in §§1.4.2-1.4.3. For Kenyon, pre-fall Adam and Eve, created only a "shade lower"¹⁰ than God, had authority over the rest of God's creation, including over Satan. However, in an act of "High Treason", they "turned this legal dominion over" to Satan.¹¹ They did not have the moral right to do

of Jesus. He also does not suggest that Jesus mentally agreed to or identified with the activities of the adversary.

³ Kenyon, *Identification*, p.28.

⁴ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.47.

⁵ See also Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.89.

⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, p.119.

⁷ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.65.

⁸ E.W. Kenyon, 'Taking our Rights', unpublished sermon preached in Pasadena, CA, 14.2.1926, supplied by Geir Lie, personal correspondence, 28.7.06.

⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.117; *Bible*, p.167.

¹⁰ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.20; *Father*, p.32: "In other words, when man was created he was made as near like Deity as it was possible for Deity to create him." Cf. *Two Kinds of Knowledge*, p.46; *What Happened*, p.62.

¹¹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.26; cf. p.58; *Father*, p.36.

so, but they did have the legal right. Therefore, this authority over creation, including humanity, was now Satan's by legal right.¹² God could have forcefully recaptured both this authority, and humanity, from Satan, but not in a way that exercised justice – towards himself, towards humanity, or least of all in this context towards Satan. Kenyon insistently repeated that God acted justly towards Satan.¹³ It is noteworthy in this respect that Kenyon made no reference to God trapping Satan, in contrast both to Copeland (see §6.2.3), and to certain early church teachers (see §6.3).

Part of the purpose of the atonement was not only to justify humanity before God and reconcile sinful people to their heavenly Father, but also to restore to humans the authority over creation, including Satan, that they had given away to Satan in Eden.¹⁴ To wrest this dominion from Satan's grasp in a way that did not undermine God's justice towards Satan (i.e. 'legally') necessarily involved, implicitly, giving Jesus over temporarily to Satan's control.¹⁵ How this made the process either a just or a legal one was not explained. Neither was it stated whether this penalty was set by God or by Satan. Furthermore, it is not clear how the arrangement would actually overcome or cancel Satan's 'legal rights'. What is clear is that Jesus' suffering, though inflicted by Satan, was significant in God's eyes in righting the wrongs of the fall – it paid the penalty sufficiently to satisfy God's justice,¹⁶ whoever had set the penalty in the first place.

Although, as just stated, the satanic control lasted until Jesus had "satisfied the demands of justice" (an oft repeated phrase of Kenyon; see §3.3.3), it is not clear which demands these were. While there is evidence that the fundamental concern was that God dealt with human sin such that he could forgive it justly, there was also at least a hint that another demand needing to be satisfied was the demand of God's justice towards Satan. Conceivably, both these possibilities were the case, for it was only while Christ was paying the penalty for human sin that Satan's power over

¹² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.38, 57-58; cf. *Bible*, pp.164-165.

¹³ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.39, 57, 113 ("nowhere does God take advantage of the Devil, but God's eternal justice to frail man and to mighty Satan is manifest"), 129, 139; cf. *What Happened*, p.99; *Bible*, p.43.

¹⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, p.134.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Kenyon, *Father*, pp.57, 138.

¹⁶ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, pp.117, 129, 134.

Christ was active: “when the penalty of our sin had been fully met, Satan had no power to hold Him longer.”¹⁷ McConnell seems to see both alleged aspects of divine justice at work, for he writes of JDS teaching, “After Jesus suffered the penalty of man’s sin *and* fulfilled all of man’s legal obligation towards Satan, God declared that justice had been done.”¹⁸ Justice now satisfied, Jesus’ three day period of suffering at Satan’s hands came to an end. Jesus was rescued by God from Satan’s grip. Once free, he vanquished Satan in a great display of victorious power, leaving Satan “paralyzed and broken on the very pavements of Hell.”¹⁹ Both Christ’s presence in hell and his defeat of Satan operated as a message proclaimed to the human and demonic spirits that also inhabited hell at that time.²⁰

It is important to note that there were two distinct phases being described. Christ’s suffering at Satan’s hands and his victory over Satan were presented as two quite separate elements in the atonement story. The suffering was not ‘scars of battle’ that happened to occur while Christ wrestled with Satan. Rather, he suffered while ‘spiritually dead’, and then conquered once ‘spiritually alive’. There is no suggestion that Jesus could hope to overcome Satan (or even that he tried to) while ‘spiritually dead’. Equally, there is no hint that Jesus could conceivably have failed to conquer Satan once ‘spiritually alive’. In fact, he seems to have fought the devil, after his ‘spiritual resurrection’, without a scratch. Christ simply beat Satan in a display of raw resurrection power, bestowed on him by God in his ‘spiritual rebirth’. This realisation creates an uncertainty concerning the relationship, if any, between the two stages in hell – Christ’s suffering at Satan’s hands and his ensuing victory over Satan. It is not clear that the two stages are causally related. Did Christ have to suffer in order to win? If so, how did the one achieve the other? If not, what part did Christ’s suffering play in relation to Satan’s downfall? Undoubtedly, Christ’s suffering substituted for the suffering of guilty sinful humans. That much is clear. But its effect on Satan’s rule is not explained.

¹⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.134; cf. pp.109, 116.

¹⁸ McConnell, *Promise*, pp.120-121, italics added.

¹⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.129.

²⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.128-130.

6.2.2 Hagin's view

Hagin, like Kenyon, believed that fallen Adam was under satanic dominion.²¹ This domination could not be reversed by the mere fiat of God, for then “Satan could accuse Him of doing the same thing he did.”²² For Hagin then, as with Kenyon, Christ had to come under Satan's mastery in his substitutionary atoning work. So Hagin plagiarised Kenyon almost exactly: “whole demon hosts, when they had Jesus within their power...”²³ Similarly, it was “in his [Satan's] own throne room” that Jesus “stripped him of his authority and dominion”.²⁴ Hagin also wrote of “the principalities and powers that had opposed the resurrection of Christ”, and continued, “when Christ bore the burdens of the world's guilt on the cross, these powers of the air sought to exercise their ancient prerogative, and hoped to hold Him under their power.”²⁵

Jesus couldn't be killed until He was made sin for us. He took our place. He had to go down into the prison house of suffering (hell) for us, because He was our substitute. I'm certain that all the devils of hell raced up and down the back alleys of hell rejoicing, “We've got the Son of God in our hands! We've defeated God's purpose!” But on that third morning, the God who is more than enough said, “It is enough! He has satisfied the claims of Justice.”²⁶

However, in Hagin's case the picture is complicated. First, he is understood by his critic Hanegraaff to have denied this teaching. In correspondence with Hanegraaff, Hagin declared, “I don't believe that Jesus... submitted to [Satan's] lordship.”²⁷ Hanegraaff could be right: this denial may mean that Hagin, at least at this time, did not view Jesus as ever being at Satan's mercy. However, it is more likely a denial that Jesus ever obeyed Satan and committed sin. If so, Hagin was more consistent than Hanegraaff gives him credit for.

²¹ Hagin, *New Thresholds*, p.56; cf. *Plead your Case*, p.3; *What to Do*, pp.15-16.

²² Hagin, *Plead your Case*, p.3.

²³ Kenneth E. Hagin, ‘The Name of Jesus: The More Excellent Name’, *The Word of Faith* April 1976, p.4, quoted along with Kenyon's equivalent words by Dan McConnell, *The Faith Movement: New Revelation or Charismatic Cultism?* (Erzhausen: unpublished European Pentecostal Theological Association conference paper, 1989), p.25. Kenyon had written, “the whole demon host, when they saw Jesus in their power...” (Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.8).

²⁴ Hagin, *Zoe*, p.45.

²⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Authority of the Believer* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1967), pp.24, 25.

²⁶ Hagin, *El Shaddai*, p.7, paragraph breaks removed.

²⁷ Hagin, correspondence with Hanegraaff, quoted in Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161, and, more briefly, in Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.156.

Secondly, Hagin's plagiarism of Kenyon did depart from the latter's words in a way that may have been semantically significant. To return to a passage cited above, this time quoting it more fully, Hagin wrote, "whole demon hosts, when they had Jesus within their power intended to swamp Him, to overwhelm Him, and *to hold Him in fearful bondage*. But the cry came forth from the throne of God that Jesus had met the demands of Justice."²⁸ Kenyon, similarly but not identically, had written, "the whole demon host, when they saw Jesus in their power simply intended to swamp Him, overwhelm Him and *they held Him in fearful bondage* until the cry came forth from the throne of God that Jesus had met the demands of justice."²⁹ Hagin's alteration of Kenyon's "they held Him in fearful bondage" from an action to a mere intention may simply indicate Hagin's wish to clarify that the demons' intent was that their 'capture' of Jesus should be permanent (hence his retention of Kenyon's verb 'hold'). However, the possibility exists that Hagin wished to draw back from ascribing domination of Jesus to 'demon hosts' with quite the clarity that Kenyon had done. Hagin's silence concerning the source of Jesus' suffering is perhaps also significant. Hagin believed that Christ "went to hell in our place", describing this place or state as a "prison house of suffering."³⁰ He indicated with reasonable clarity that Christ Himself suffered there,³¹ but he did not explicate whether he viewed Satan as having a role in this experience.

In conclusion, Hagin's ideas approximated to those of Kenyon, but were not identical. With respect to Satan's alleged domination of Christ, Hagin's plagiarising of Kenyon would suggest that he believed that it occurred, but did not express this as forthrightly as Kenyon. With respect to the suffering inflicted on Christ, Hagin did not explicitly ascribe this to Satan.

6.2.3 Copeland's view

Copeland agrees with Kenyon and Hagin that Adam's sin of treason caused Satan to have 'legal' authority. Though he does not spell out the details at the length that

²⁸ Hagin, 'Name of Jesus', quoted by McConnell, *Faith Movement*, p.25; italics added.

²⁹ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.8; italics added. Almost identical words occur in *Bible*, p.187.

³⁰ Hagin, *Name*, pp.29, 32-33; *Present-Day Ministry*, p.8.

³¹ Hagin, *Present-Day Ministry*, pp.6, 8.

Kenyon did, he does nevertheless imply that the atonement is a legal necessity, and that this issue of legality involves Satan as one of the litigants.³² The implication is thus that God dealt with Satan justly, although Copeland is not as insistent on this point as Kenyon was.

Of Jesus, Copeland writes in ways that freely mix the related concepts of Jesus' being under Satan's authority and of his suffering at the latter's hands. Thus he states:

The devil didn't quite understand it. All he knew was, suddenly, *Jesus was at his mercy*, and he jumped at the opportunity. In a matter of hours, he succeeded at what he hadn't been able to do for three years. *He murdered Jesus of Nazareth and took Him into hell.*³³

Copeland continues: Jesus "went into that place and *all* the demons of the damned moved in on Him to annihilate Him... Satan thought, *I've finally got Him!*... Satan was sitting on his throne ruling over Him."³⁴ Copeland is comfortable with graphic language to describe Christ's hellish sufferings.³⁵ As with Kenyon's exposition, however, this state was temporary: "He went to hell and paid the price for our sin; but because He was sinless, because He had not broken the Covenant, hell could not hold Him! He whipped Satan and took the keys of death and hell."³⁶

But suddenly, in the midst of it all, God the heavenly Father said, "that's enough!"... and the power of Almighty God began to stream down from heaven and break the locks off the gates of hell... Jesus began to stir. The power of heaven penetrated and re-created His spirit. He rose up and in a moment of super conquest, He kicked the daylights out of the devil and all those who were doing his work.

The Bible says He led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8) and preached the gospel in hell itself (1 Peter 3:19). Then Jesus came up out of that place of torment in triumph, went back through the tomb, into His body, and walked out of there.³⁷

³² Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.2; cf. *Force of Faith*, p.14.

³³ Copeland, 'Gates', p.5, italics added.

³⁴ Copeland, 'Gates', p.6, italics original.

³⁵ He writes, for instance, of "Jesus' emaciated, sin-filled spirit." ('To Know the Glory', p.6). For a brief audio recording of Copeland's relevant words, refer to Kenneth Copeland, 'What Happened to Jesus in Hell?' (n.d.) at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/belfastberean/audiotcce.htm>, as accessed on 23.7.04.

³⁶ Copeland, *Covenant*, p.39.

³⁷ Copeland, 'Gates', p.6.

The reference in this paragraph to Christ's spirit being 're-created'³⁸ is evidence that this suffering at Satan's hands was connected with Christ's 'spiritual death'. However, the causality in this connection seems to differ from that in Kenyon's thinking. In the latter's writing, the implication was that 'spiritual death' was the cause and Satan's mastery the result (see §6.2.1). In Copeland's view, on the other hand, Satan's mastery, into which Christ voluntarily entered, caused Christ's 'spiritual death':

Like Adam, Christ made himself obedient to death and put himself into the hands of God's enemy, Satan. Unlike Adam, Christ committed this act by choice – not by treason. He paid the price for Adam's treason. When He did, the same thing happened to Christ that happened to Adam – spiritual death.³⁹

Another viewpoint revealed in this quotation is that Copeland follows Kenyon in regarding Christ's position under Satan's authority as dealing with the problem of human sin: "He paid the price for Adam's treason" presumably refers to all human sin rather than just Adam's. The same is implied in the more general statement, that does not refer to satanic suffering specifically: "It was by enduring spiritual death that Jesus paid the complete penalty for sin."⁴⁰

While following Kenyon in stating that God acted legally in the atonement, Copeland overtly introduces the theme that Satan acted illegally (Kenyon may of course have believed this, without setting it out explicitly). It is this illegality that made his end inevitable: "When Satan took Jesus to hell illegally, he opened the door for overthrow."⁴¹ A further respect in which Copeland's articulation varies from that of Kenyon is that Copeland explicitly sees Satan as trapped by God:

He's got Satan right where He wants him. Yeah – praise God – He had [got him?] where he couldn't operate because it was illegal. This Man had not sinned. This Man had not fallen out of the covenant of God; and He had the promise of God for deliverance. And Satan fell into the trap. He took Him into hell illegally. He carried Him in there [when] He did not sin. And the Bible says He was justified in the Spirit.⁴²

³⁸ The reference to a 're-creation' of Christ's spirit is presumably loose. Hagin emphasised that 'spiritual death' did not involve the cessation of existence (*Name*, p.30). There is no evidence that Copeland departs from this view.

³⁹ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3. Elsewhere, Copeland also presents Christ's 'spiritual death' as the logical outcome of his being 'made sin' (*Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.1).

⁴⁰ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.3.

⁴¹ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; cf. *Covenant*, p.29.

⁴² Copeland, *What Happened*, side 2; on side 1 he speaks of God "setting this trap" for Satan; cf. *Covenant*, p.10.

Though this may initially seem to contradict Copeland's idea of God's justice to Satan, it will emerge in later discussion about the beliefs of the early church that exponents then of ransom theories were able to combine both concepts, justice and trapping, and to offer alleged justification for doing so (see §6.3.2). Perhaps Copeland too sees no difficulty in holding both ideas.

In conclusion, Copeland follows Kenyon in regarding: Jesus as both under Satan's authority and suffering at his hands while 'spiritually dead'; God as dealing with Satan justly in this process; and this suffering of Jesus as instrumental in solving the problem of human sin. He differs from or develops beyond Kenyon in seeing: Satan acting illegally; Satan trapped in the process; and Christ's domination by Satan as the cause rather than result of his 'spiritual death'. This last distinction between Kenyon's and Copeland's views suggests a slight possible difference in understanding about the process of Christ's demise. For Kenyon, God removes 'spiritual life' from his Son, and as a result, the latter is at Satan's behest; for Copeland, Jesus voluntarily hands himself over to Satan, and 'spiritual death' follows inevitably. This might explain why Kenyon could say that God sent Jesus to hell, as well as that Satan took him there. For Copeland, in contrast, only the latter is true.⁴³

Finally, Copeland's articulation offers an answer to a question that was left open in Kenyon's. Some explanation is provided concerning *how* God's victory over Satan is related to Jesus' suffering at his hands. These two phases in the salvation story are presented in tandem, as they were by Kenyon, but are now interrelated. The illegality of Satan's cruelty to Jesus trapped Satan and led to his downfall. Whether this is a convincing explanation will be considered in §6.5.2.

6.2.4 Conclusion to §6.2

In conclusion to this section, Kenyon viewed Jesus as having been under Satan's dominion and as having suffered under him. While a certain 'substitutionary logic' is discernible – this had happened to Adam; now it must happen to Jesus – nevertheless the overall logic is less than impressive. Questions remain unanswered about the

⁴³ See discussion in §4.2.4 about the extent to which Jesus, in these JDS portrayals, voluntarily went to his own 'spiritual death'.

nature of God's justice and the 'satisfaction' of its demands, and about the link between Christ's suffering and victory.⁴⁴ Hagin perhaps offered a 'softer' account of this aspect of Christ's sufferings. Now Satan and his hordes had Christ under their control, but the degree and consequences of such control are less clear. Jesus suffered, but it is not set out who or what caused this. Copeland returns to a more similar account to Kenyon's, but introduces the ideas of Satan acting illegally and being trapped. Thereby he goes further than Kenyon did in attempting to explain the causative link between Christ's suffering and his victory.

6.3 Responses of the critics

In this section, critics' concerns will be considered. Beyond brief general observations that this third aspect of JDS teaching is taught in the Word-faith movement,⁴⁵ responses centre round the place given to Satan in JDS teaching (see §5.2.1), and more specifically the relationship the doctrine has with ransom theories of the atonement emanating from the early church. The latter will be considered in this section. It is necessary first to note that the concept of Jesus suffering at Satan's hands and that of Jesus being 'paid' as a ransom to the devil are not identical. Of course, it is easy to present a scenario in which both occur. However, one may occur without the other. Jesus might actively confront Satan and suffer injury in that conflict, without being handed over to Satan at all. In contrast, Jesus could be paid, or at least offered, to Satan, as the bait in a trap, without suffering in the process (whatever the fate of the bait on Gregory's fish-hook or in Augustine's mousetrap).

A number of commentators link this 'Satan's prey' aspect of JDS teaching with classical ransom theories. These include, in the great majority, those who are critical of JDS teaching.⁴⁶ They also include, however, a small proportion of debaters who

⁴⁴ Rashdall observed similar unanswerable questions in early church ransom theories: "Why any such ransom should be paid, it is difficult to understand, since it is admitted that man really belonged to God" and "How exactly Christ's death... [was] supposed to defeat the demons is not explained" (*Idea of the Atonement*, pp.243, 261).

⁴⁵ E.g. Perriman, *Faith*, pp.23, 113-114 (who responds: "Nothing is said [in the Bible] about him being tormented in hell"); Bowman, *Controversy*, p.161; Brandon, *Health*, pp.124, 127 ("Dramatic pictures are painted of Jesus manacled to Satan and mocked by hosts of leering demons... The story is riveting but the theology is absurd"); Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.163-166.

⁴⁶ Perriman, *Faith*, p.115 (Perriman's criticism is nuanced: "Although many would regard this sort of mythologization as an absurd and unnecessary encumbrance on the gospel in the modern world, it is

defend JDS teaching on the basis that its resemblance to ransom theories places it within the range of historically accepted ‘orthodox’ understandings of the atonement.⁴⁷ None of the observers who note this association offers extensive evidence of it, and few seek to clarify the degree of similarity that exists.⁴⁸ Indeed, at least in certain respects Hanegraaff notes marked contrasts between ransom theories and JDS teaching.⁴⁹ Therefore, this section will first consider the extent to which JDS teaching does in fact mirror ransom theories. In pursuing this analytical task, it must be noted that individual ‘ransom’ writers offered differing perspectives and details. It is therefore more appropriate to write of ‘ransom theories’ than a solitary ‘ransom theory’.⁵⁰ This variety naturally complicates matters. A claim cannot be made that all the early ransom proponents believed all the elements that are usually brought together when ransom theology is described.

The following common factors between JDS teaching and early ransom theories can be noted: Satan’s grip on humanity can be traced back to Adam’s fall;⁵¹ Satan rightfully or legally owned fallen humanity;⁵² in giving Jesus, God acted towards Satan not with force but with justice;⁵³ Satan caused Jesus’ death;⁵⁴ in his death, Jesus entered Satan’s domain to deliver people from his grip;⁵⁵ Satan in the process

in tune with the more extreme Pentecostal instinct for spiritual vaudeville.”); McConnell, *Promise*, pp.119, 125-126; Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, pp.70-71; dal Bello, *Atonement Where?* Part 2, p.9; Gary E. Gilley, ‘The Word-Faith Movement’ (1999), accessed 18.2.05 from www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/char/more/w-f.htm.

⁴⁷ DeArteaga, *Quenching the Spirit*, pp.240, 270-271; Spencer, *Heresy Hunters*, p.102.

⁴⁸ One brief comment about the degree of similarity, e.g., is Lie’s: ‘Theology’, p.97, n.71.

⁴⁹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.395, n.2.

⁵⁰ Eugene Teselle, ‘The Cross as Ransom’, pp.147-170, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4:2 (Summer 1996), offers a threefold categorisation.

⁵¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.XXI.1, 3 (*ANF* I, pp.548, 550); Augustine, *On the Holy Trinity* XIII.12 (*NPNF* I/III, p.175), referring to Gen.3:14, 19 together; (tentatively) Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians* VI (*NPNF* I/XIII, p.286); (obliquely) Rufinus, *A Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed* 15 (*NPNF* II/III, p.549).

⁵² Tertullian, *De Fuga in Persecutione* 2 (*ANF*, p.117); Augustine, *Trinity* XIII.15 (*NPNF* I/III, p.177).

⁵³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.1.1 (*ANF* I, p.527); Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* XXII (*NPNF* II/V, pp.492-493) – despite Gregory’s admission that “there was deception” in God’s “device” (*Catechism* XXVI [p.495]); Augustine, *Trinity* XIII.14 (*NPNF* I/III, p.177); Leo the Great, *Sermon* XXII III (*NPNF* II/XII, p.130).

⁵⁴ Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* XIII.9 (*ANF* X, p.480); Augustine, *Trinity* IV.13, XIII.14 (*NPNF* I/III, pp.78, 177).

⁵⁵ Origen as understood by Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, p.261 (“The whole idea [of ransom in Origen] is closely associated, as the context shows, with the belief that the disembodied Christ literally went down into the strong man’s domain, preached to the spirits in prison, delivered them

was trapped.⁵⁶ As with Copeland's views today, the idea of Satan being trapped could be combined with the view that God acted towards him justly in the process. This peculiar combination was justified on the basis that "the deceiver was in turn deceived."⁵⁷

On the other hand, there are also important differences. Nowhere in the JDS teaching of the three proponents under review is this aspect of the atonement referred to as a ransom. The nearest Kenyon came was to write, "He must in some way redeem man from Satanic dominion."⁵⁸ As Lie observes,⁵⁹ there is no sense in JDS teaching that Jesus was 'paid' to the devil, or that a transaction at an agreed price occurred.⁶⁰ On the other hand, JDS teaching incorporates elements not found in the classical formulations. Jesus' suffering, inflicted by Satan, is now much more than his physical death. He is taken into hell and suffers there throughout the time he is 'spiritually dead'. This is distinctly different from the point made in some early ransom theories, and indeed elsewhere in early Christian teaching on the atonement, that Jesus went into hades and there plundered its contents. In the early versions, Jesus had already defeated Satan on the cross (whether or not this included his life being a ransom payment to Satan)⁶¹ and his 'journey' to hades was a victorious one, whether to proclaim, release, or both.⁶² In the JDS version, Jesus goes to hell while

from Satan's thralldom, then rose Himself from the dead"); Rufinus, *Commentary* 16-17 (NPNF II/III, p.550).

⁵⁶ Augustine, *Sermons* 263.2 (ET Edmund Hill [New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1993], III/7, p.220); Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* XXXIII.XV.52-53 (*S. Gregorii Magni Opera* [Turnhout: Brepols, 1985], p.1700); Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechism* XXIV (NPNF II/V, p.494).

⁵⁷ Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechism* XXVI (NPNF II/V, p.495). In Gregory's case, the perceived morality of this deception was aided by the belief that Satan would be saved (p.496).

⁵⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.114; similarly *What Happened*, p.141; cf. Irenaeus, *Heresies* V.1.1 (ANF I, p.527) – *redemptione*; Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* XVI.8, quoted in Grensted, *History*, p.38 – λύτρον; Gregory of Nyssa, *Great Catechism* XXII (NPNF II/V, p.492) – λύτρον.

⁵⁹ Lie, 'Theology', p.97.

⁶⁰ Cf. Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 2.13.29 (ET Thomas P. Scheck [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], p.161).

⁶¹ Smail, Walker and Wright make essentially the same point ('Revelation Knowledge', p.71).

⁶² As with ransom theories, beliefs about both Christ's defeat of Satan and his possible 'descent' into hades were varied and relatively unformulated. For Irenaeus, while Jesus did indeed overthrow Satan, and wrest humanity from him, this was not consistently linked with the cross, let alone his descent. It was as much a result of his teaching truth. Jesus did descend during the three days, but this was to preach, not to defeat Satan (*Against Heresies* IV.XXVII.2; V.XXI.3; V.XXII.1; V.XXXI.1 [ANF I, pp.527, 550, 560]). For Tertullian, Jesus descended to hades to "make the patriarchs and prophets partakers of Himself." Insofar as this was a rescue, it can possibly be inferred that, ultimately, it was a rescue from Satan. However, Satan was not mentioned, and although hades was "a vast deep space in the interior of the earth", it was not portrayed as Satan's domain (*Treatise on the Soul* LV [ANF III,

the outcome of the battle, to its participants at least, is still undecided. Satan seems to have the upper hand, until God says, “Enough!” and Jesus, alive once more, only now defeats Satan.

The JDS view can also be contrasted with the ‘harrowing of hell’, in which Christ in his descent defeated not so much Satan as (personified) hell itself. This ancient belief is attested in a number of works. Chrysostom for example wrote: “By descending into hell, he made hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of his flesh.”⁶³ Examples include those who used Jonah as an analogy, such as Cyril of Jerusalem, “The one was cast into a whale’s belly: but the other of His own accord went down thither, where the invisible whale of death is. And He went down of His own accord, that death might cast up those whom he had devoured,”⁶⁴ and Athanasius, who wrote with similar reference to Jonah but in the negative, “Jonah was not as the Saviour, nor did Jonah go down to hades; nor was the whale hades; nor did Jonah, when swallowed up, bring up those who had before been swallowed by the whale, but he alone came forth.”⁶⁵ Liturgical attestation is also found in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Saint Macrina*,⁶⁶ and in the *Odes of Solomon*.⁶⁷ The *Odes*, and similar texts, are discussed by Gounelle: “nous apprenons... que l’entrée de l’enfer est brisée, que le Christ y pénètre, enchaîne l’enfer, et en ressort avec les patriarches.”⁶⁸ In these cases, Satan might possibly be inferred to lie metaphorically behind this personification of hades or hell, but such an inference is by no means certain.

p.231]). In Chrysostom’s thought, the capture of Satan was overtly linked to Christ’s descent to hades (*Ephesians homilies* XI [NPNF I/XIII, p.104]). Only rarely, however, were all these disparate thoughts brought together so that Christ in his descent into death or hades entered Satan’s domain and delivered people from his clutches (e.g. Augustine, *Letters* CLXIV [NPNF I/I, pp.516-517]; cf. the yet more imaginative mythology of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, part II [ANF VIII, pp.448-458]). Never was it in hades that victory over Satan was first achieved.

⁶³ John Chrysostom, *Paschal Homily*, provided in personal correspondence by Robert Forrest.

⁶⁴ Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures* XIV.17 (NPNF II/VII, pp.98-99).

⁶⁵ Athanasius, *Against Arians* III.XXV.23 (NPNF II/IV, p.406).

⁶⁶ ET Kevin Corrigan (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 1997), provided in personal correspondence by Robert Forrest.

⁶⁷ 15:9 (?); 17:9-13; 22:1-4; 42:11-20 (ET James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* Vol.2 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985], pp.748-771). This collection also refers to Christ’s defeat of the “dragon with seven heads” (22:5).

⁶⁸ Rémi Gounelle, *La Descente du Christe aux Enfers* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp.39-47, quotation from p.44.

The three previous paragraphs indicate that JDS teaching, in this respect, cannot simply be characterised as ‘a form of ransom theory’, or a version of the ‘harrowing of hell’, if this is meant to suggest great parallel with ancient forms. There are distinct commonalities, but these by no means overwhelm the differences. The degree of difference means an appeal cannot be made that JDS must be regarded as ‘orthodox’, on the grounds of ransom theories’ centuries-long sway in ‘orthodox’ Christianity.⁶⁹ In contrast, the degree of commonality might help to explain how this aspect of JDS teaching came about. Smail, Walker and Wright, referring to ransom theories and other atonement ideas prevalent in the early centuries, claim that “Faith teachers... certainly have inklings of such teachings.”⁷⁰ This speculation is justified (see §6.4.1).

6.4 JDS sources

The three JDS proponents under review claim only the Bible as the source of their doctrine. They sometimes refer to and commend the views of more recent Christians, but never claim them as the primary influencers of their understanding. However, it has emerged in earlier chapters that this claim is sharply challenged, mainly by and through the work of Dan McConnell, who claims that Kenyon was influenced by the ‘heterodox’ ideas of New Thought and Christian Science, and that Hagin and Copeland were also influenced indirectly, through Kenyon. Since McConnell’s work was published, the counter-claim has emerged that Kenyon’s main influences were actually ‘orthodox’, and came largely from within the movements known as Higher Life and Faith Cure (see discussion, §§1.7; 3.3). It is thus necessary to consider

⁶⁹ Grensted, *History*, p.33 (900 years); Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, pp.247, 350 (nearly 1000 years). While many might wish to agree with the verdict of Rashdall, enthusiastic Abelardian proponent of a subjective atonement, that ransom theories are “childish”, “hideous” “grotesque”, “monstrous”, “immoral” and “offensive”, (*Idea of the Atonement*, pp.245, 248, 259, 261, 262, 319, 350, 364), nevertheless it is important to recognise a number of opposing considerations. Darby Kathleen Ray observes that the ransom theories were “enormously convincing to many sharp-minded people for hundreds of years” (*Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* [Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1998], p.121). Furthermore, some commentators today find merit in these theories, either in their original forms, (e.g. Charles A. Taliaferro, ‘A Narnian Theory of the Atonement’, pp.75-92, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41:1 [1988], p.81) or in highly demythologised versions serving feminist or other broader concerns (e.g. Ray, *Deceiving the Devil* [feminist]; Teselle, ‘Cross as Ransom’). On the other hand, the finding that ransom theories first flourished in Marcionite and gnostic circles (Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, p.245; Teselle, ‘Cross as Ransom’, pp.157-158; Grensted, *History*, p.34) offers ‘grist to the mill’ of those who view JDS teaching as ‘heterodox’.

⁷⁰ Smail, Walker and Wright, ‘Revelation Knowledge’, p.70.

Kenyon's possible non-biblical sources (§6.4.1), before proceeding to discuss JDS teachers' use of the Bible (§§6.4.2-6.4.4).

6.4.1 Kenyon's possible non-biblical sources

There is no doubt that Kenyon was aware of early church theology. Lie makes mention of Kenyon's knowledge of Polycarp's life, and that Kenyon read Irenaeus.⁷¹ McIntyre also refers to Kenyon's having read "the Church Fathers."⁷² So Kenyon may have picked up strands of ransom theology and Christ's 'descent' directly from early sources. However, it will emerge below that similar ideas were prevalent in Kenyon's own day, among those he listened to and admired. Thus he may also have become familiar with them as mediated through these latter sources.

Turning now to the possible influences of his own generation on him, and in particular of New Thought or Christian Science on the one hand and Higher Life or Faith Cure on the other, all that needs to be repeated here (see §5.5.1) with respect to New Thought and Christian Science is that the writers introduced in §2.5.1 either did not believe in a personal devil, or if they did, they gave him little attention. Thus none of Kenyon's distinctive ideas about Christ as Satan's prey can be traced there. On the other hand, Higher Life and Faith Cure writers, who believed in Satan and gave him some attention, though less than Kenyon, believed that Christ's death vanquished Satan. In fact, a number of Kenyon's ideas are found among them.

Andrew Murray, who in general wrote little about Satan, including in his depictions of the atonement, nevertheless pictured one aspect of Christ's atoning work in terms similar to the early church on one hand and Kenyon on the other.

God, at creation, had placed man under the government of His Son. By yielding to the temptations of Satan man fell from God, and became entirely subject to the authority of the Tempter; he became his slave. It was the law of God that prohibited sin and threatened punishment. When man sinned, it was this law that bestowed upon Satan his authority... God Himself gave man up to be a slave, in the prison-house of Satan; and for man there was no possibility of redemption save by ransom – by the payment of the price which the law must righteously demand as ransom, for the redemption of prisoners... Jesus Christ has purchased, with His own blood, our freedom from the prison and slavery of

⁷¹ Lie, personal correspondence, 28.7.06 and 30.7.06.

⁷² McIntyre, personal correspondence, 2.8.06.

Satan, in which he as our enemy had lodged us, and to which the law of God had condemned us.⁷³

Adam

yielded himself to Satan, and Satan had power over him. As the jailer keeps the prisoner under the authority of the king, Satan holds the sinner in the power of death so long as no true legal release is given... He [Jesus] entered into our death, and endured it as the penalty of sin, and, enduring it, satisfied the law of God. And so, because the law had been the strength of sin, He took from sin and the devil the power of death over us.⁷⁴

These quotations indicate between them that, for Murray, Satan held sway over sinful humanity as a result of the fall (although, like some more developed ideas in the early church,⁷⁵ only as God's gaoler), for release to be achieved it had to be 'legal', Christ's death served as a ransom price precisely to release humanity from *satanic* bondage, and in his death, as opposed to his resurrection, Christ conquered over Satan. It has already been demonstrated that these ideas were all present in the early church, and may have reached Kenyon directly from those sources. This may, additionally, have been reinforced through intermediaries like Murray. In contrast, it must be noted that Murray made no mention of Kenyon's more novel ideas that Jesus suffered at Satan's hands, or that Jesus suffered not only on the cross but also in the *triduum mortis*.

Another of Kenyon's champions who believed that Christ in his death conquered Satan was A. J. Gordon.⁷⁶ Unlike Kenyon, he was explicit that this was achieved on the cross, and required no further work during the *triduum*: "Now all these things are passed forever both for Him and for us, as soon as the 'It is finished' has been spoken."⁷⁷ In fact, Higher Life and Faith Cure authors hardly mentioned the *triduum*. A. B. Simpson did so, but indicated no suffering on Christ's part there, and no contact with Satan (he believed that victory over Satan occurred on the cross): Jesus "was going out into deeper death, and His heart was all pent up with it, until He went down into Gethsemane, down into Joseph's tomb, down into Hades and passed

⁷³ Murray, *Power of the Blood*, p.169. Note that Murray did not indicate that the ransom was paid to the devil. Elsewhere, he wrote that Christ "gave up His life to God" (*Out of His Fulness* [London: James Nisbet & Co. Limited, 1897], p.51, italics original).

⁷⁴ Andrew Murray, *Holiest of All*, p.96 (commenting on Hebrews 2:14).

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, p.330 concerning Augustine.

⁷⁶ Gordon, *In Christ*, p.44.

⁷⁷ Gordon, *In Christ*, p.46.

through the regions of the dead and opened first the gates of heaven.”⁷⁸ Like Murray’s ransom teaching, this view of hades did not add anything original beyond ‘orthodox’ tradition, and therefore does not explain any of Kenyon’s particular distinctives.

In conclusion, some of Kenyon’s motifs were already present in Higher Life and Faith Cure. He may have drawn upon these. However, the only ones that were present were already found in the early church. None of Kenyon’s especially controversial teachings lay there. Given that they were also not to be found in New Thought or Christian Science, it can only be concluded, as with certain other aspects of JDS doctrine, that Kenyon developed them himself from the raw materials of biblical data and the dualistic and idealistic worldview that he inherited from his ecclesial and social environment.

6.4.2 Satan in charge of the world

Discussion now moves to JDS teachers’ biblical sources. Kenyon, followed by Hagin, frequently offered scriptural confirmation for his understanding that the fallen world lay under Satan’s charge. Jesus’ temptation recorded in Luke 4:6-7 was evidence, for Kenyon, that Satan ruled the world, and that Jesus knew this:

If the devil lied to Jesus and Jesus did not know it, Jesus was not the incarnate Son of God. If the devil lied to Jesus, and Jesus knew that he lied, it was not a genuine temptation. We believe that the Bible is true, and that this was a genuine temptation. Then Jesus recognized that Satan had authority and dominion over the kingdoms of the human race, which he could transfer at his will to whomsoever he wished.⁷⁹

Even allowing that it is possible to read Christ’s mind, Kenyon’s argumentation is flawed. His first point assumes that for Jesus to be ‘the incarnate Son of God’, he must have been all-knowing. This was not the view of Luke, for whom Jesus grew in knowledge and wisdom like any human, for instance by asking questions (Luke 2:46, 52). His second point is psychologically flawed. Many have faced a ‘genuine temptation’ while recognising that its basis involved untruth. Furthermore, this attempted proof text for the rule of Satan over the world seems to involve an

⁷⁸ Simpson, *Gospel of Healing*, p.101.

⁷⁹ Kenyon, *Bible*, p.27, paragraph breaks removed; cf. *Father*, pp.39, 58, 61; Hagin, *What to Do*, pp.15-16.

unfortunate case of ‘taking Satan’s word for it’. The psalmists declared otherwise (Psalm 24:1; 115:16).

Some biblical designations of Satan are also used in JDS teaching to support its view of Satan’s reign. John 14:30, with its reference to the prince, or ruler, of the world, caused Kenyon to state: “Satan here is recognized as the political head of the human race and of the kingdoms of the world. It does not seem necessary to attempt to defend this point.”⁸⁰ Similarly, when Hagin described Adam’s ‘high treason’ by which he handed over his God-given authority to Satan, he referred to Satan’s becoming ‘the god of this world’, and went on to declare, “He is called that in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 4:4).”⁸¹ While 2 Corinthians 4:4 actually refers to ‘the god of this age’, the point remains that Satan is in view, and called a ‘god’. Kenyon merely took this to mean that, for Paul, Satan demands worship.⁸² This is plausible (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:2; Ephesians 2:2). However, Paul may also have meant that “Satan controls this age under God’s decree,”⁸³ but even this, and similar references in John, do not need to suggest that Satan had such an absolute control that God was restricted in his access until he used a ‘legal’ means to restore it.

Lastly, Kenyon made the peculiar claim that “if you will notice, all through the Scriptures God and the angels treat Satan with a certain deference; they recognize his legal dominion.”⁸⁴ No examples were offered. As the task was left to Kenyon’s readers to notice this deference, his readers are free to conclude that such deference is not ‘all through’ the Bible. Texts such as Job 1:6-12 and Jude 9 indicate a certain respect or even deference, but not ‘legal dominion’.

6.4.3 Jesus in Hades/ Hell

The texts that JDS teachers refer to in defending their view of Christ in hell are unsurprising, and their use of them in many ways unremarkable. In order to demonstrate that Jesus went to hades, which they simply and erroneously equate with

⁸⁰ Kenyon, *Father*, p.40.

⁸¹ Hagin, *Plead Your Case*, p.3; cf. *New Thresholds*, p.53 (p.56 in 2nd edn); Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.5.

⁸² Kenyon, *Father*, pp.40, 62.

⁸³ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p.78.

⁸⁴ Kenyon, *Father*, p.58.

hell,⁸⁵ the teachers under review refer to the same cluster of proof-texts utilised by the many other Christians who hold or have held to this questionable but widespread view. They are, primarily, Matthew 12:40,⁸⁶ Acts 2:24-31,⁸⁷ Romans 10:7,⁸⁸ and Ephesians 4:9.⁸⁹ If these texts are simply understood to indicate, between them, the fact that Jesus was truly dead, they are unproblematic. Indeed, Romans 10:7 states as much. Furthermore, such passages in all likelihood contributed to the church's early credal formulae that 'He descended to hades/ hell.'⁹⁰

However, JDS teaching goes further. Some of the texts are used to indicate that Jesus actively suffered in hell. Romans 10:7 is connected with Revelation 9:1; 20:1 to claim that hades was the haunt of demons.⁹¹ This will be considered below (§6.4.4). Acts 2:24-31 is used, because of its reference to "the pains of death."⁹² Matthew 12:40 is used because of its evocative analogy with the experience of Jonah.⁹³ The use to which this analogy was put by, for instance, Cyril of Jerusalem and Athanasius, has already been noted (§6.3). Copeland, however, pushes the analogy further than had traditionally been done. For Copeland, part of the significance of the parallel between Jonah and Jesus is that Jonah's experience in the great fish was a painful one. Thus, projected onto Jesus, Jonah's experience is used to provide the thought that Jesus suffered during the *triduum mortis*. He was not in paradise, but in torment.

Jonah did not describe his experience like a place of comfort but a place of torment. God heard him cry "out of the belly of hell" or the grave (Jonah 2:2)... Since Jonah's words describe the death of Jesus also, we know that Jesus went

⁸⁵ E.g. Kenyon, *Father*, p.132.

⁸⁶ Kenyon, *Father*, p.131; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4; *Jesus In Hell*, p.1.

⁸⁷ Kenyon, *Father*, p.132; *Bible*, pp.166, 181; *What Happened*, p.59; Hagin, *Name*, p.32; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; *Did Jesus Die Spiritually?*, p.3; *Jesus In Hell*, p.1.

⁸⁸ Kenyon, *Father*, p.133; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4; *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

⁸⁹ Kenyon, *Father*, p.133; *What Happened*, p.75; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5.

⁹⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2003), p.174 (Ac.2:27; Eph.4:9); James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC. Milton Keynes: Word [UK], 1991 [1988]), p.606 (Rom.10:7).

⁹¹ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4; *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

⁹² Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5: "Jesus had already been delivered from the pain of physical death as soon as He left His body... Jesus had to be loosed from the pains of death because He had gone down where the punishment for sin was... Jesus was delivered from a spiritual death that was painful and full of travail."

⁹³ For discussion about whether rabbinic beliefs that Jonah descended to the underworld were old enough to have affected the conceptuality and composition of Matthew 12:40, see W. Hall Harris III, *The Descent of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998 [1996]), pp.59-62.

to the tormented destiny of the rich man rather than the comforting place where Lazarus rested.⁹⁴

The texts cited by Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland are a slender base on which to build their view. They may, taken together, suggest the ideas that JDS teaching culls from them. However, they are certainly open to other interpretations as well. Matthew 12:40 might simply refer to Christ's physical burial.⁹⁵ Even if it is taken to refer to hades, which is more plausible, the difficulty with Copeland's exegesis is the degree of significance attributed to an analogy, and the lack of concern expressed for Jesus' own purpose in offering this analogy, as portrayed by Matthew. This is not to claim that Copeland's exegesis is necessarily wrong – only that the analogy in Matthew is not sufficient evidential premise on which to rest such a conclusion. Romans 10:7 may refer to hades, but says nothing of suffering. Ephesians 4:9 is notoriously difficult. It might refer to the incarnation,⁹⁶ Christ's death,⁹⁷ or the giving of the Spirit and his gifts.⁹⁸ It is not safe to place much weight on this verse.

Acts 2:24-31 provides an opportunity to consider the overall views of a biblical author on the subject, for Luke mentioned hades a number of times. Exegesis of the references in Acts to abandonment to hades has already been offered (§4.5). It was concluded there that in that passage Luke did not conceive of Christ going to hades. Further study of the Lukan material confirms such a conclusion. Whatever stage the evolution of the concept of hades had reached by the time Luke wrote, there is no doubt that for Luke, it was a place or state of both shame (Luke 10:15) and suffering (Luke 16:23). On the other hand, paradise was a place or state of promise and comfort (Luke 23:43). It is therefore unlikely that in Luke's worldview paradise was a 'compartment' within hades. With all this in mind, Luke 23:43 serves as a statement not only about the thief's blessedness immediately after death, but about

⁹⁴ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4.

⁹⁵ Admittedly, this is unlikely, given the association between ἕδης and καρδία in LXX Jonah 2:3-4. See John Yates, "He Descended Into Hell": Creed, Article And Scripture Part II', pp.303-315, *Churchman* 102.4 (1988), p.303.

⁹⁶ So O'Brien, *Ephesians*, pp.294-296.

⁹⁷ Dunn, James D. G., *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1980), pp.186-187.

⁹⁸ Harris, *Descent of Christ*.

Christ's as well.⁹⁹ It is safe to conclude that Luke was consistent: Jesus did not 'descend' to hades after death, but was welcomed into paradise. Luke 23:46 serves to confirm this conclusion. All this tends to support the understanding of Acts 2:27, 31, against JDS teaching, that Luke meant to convey the idea that God did not allow Jesus to go to hades, understood as a place of suffering, at all.

While Luke cannot be taken to have been speaking for the whole New Testament at this point, his view is nevertheless instructive,¹⁰⁰ and suggests that caution must be exercised before deciding that other New Testament authors regarded Christ as entering a state or descending into a place of suffering while dead.

6.4.4 Jesus and Satan's armies

JDS teaching goes further still. Not only did Jesus suffer in hell, but this suffering was at the hands of Satan and his hordes. This is supported biblically with reference to, especially, Colossians 2:15,¹⁰¹ Hebrews 2:14,¹⁰² and Romans 10:7 taken with Revelation 9:1; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1.¹⁰³ These texts require little discussion.

Kenyon offered a dramatic reconstruction from Colossians 2:15:

And "having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col.2:15) It is more graphic in a marginal rendering. "Having put off from himself the principalities and the powers, (It would seem as though the whole hosts of hell were upon him. He was going through agonies beyond words, and suddenly is justified, made alive.) "He hurls back the hosts of darkness."¹⁰⁴

It is indeed possible that ἀπεκδυσάμενος is validly translated as 'having put off from himself', rather than 'having disarmed'.¹⁰⁵ However, there is no need from this text to separate this event temporally from the cross, as Copeland seeks to do,

⁹⁹ JDS teaching 'bypasses' this verse by understanding it to mean, "I tell today, you will be with me in paradise." For discussion of this unlikely interpretation, see §4.5.

¹⁰⁰ The Johannine death cry, "It is finished!" is likely to testify to the same belief.

¹⁰¹ Kenyon, *Father*, pp.117, 133-134; *Wonderful Name*, p.8; *Bible*, pp.167, 186-187; *What Happened*, pp.65, 69, 79, 89, 116; Hagin, *Authority*, p.24; *El Shaddai*, p.7; Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.5; *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

¹⁰² Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.9; *Bible*, p.187; *What Happened*, pp.65, 117.

¹⁰³ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4; *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

¹⁰⁴ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.65.

¹⁰⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (NIGTC. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1996), p.167.

denying that ἐν αὐτῷ refers to the cross¹⁰⁶ (which it may or may not do). A JDS reading also requires that the “rulers and authorities” be understood as demonic, rather than human. Such an interpretation is contested.¹⁰⁷

Hebrews 2:14 shows clearly a contest with Satan, with the victory achieved through Christ’s death. However, it is easier to associate this victory with Christ’s death on the cross than with a battle in the underworld between Satan and the ‘spiritually resurrected’ but not yet physically resurrected Christ. This, nevertheless, is what Kenyon portrayed:

When this cry [that Jesus had met the demands of justice] reached the dark regions, Jesus rose and hurled back the hosts of darkness, and met Satan in awful combat as described in Hebrews 2:14: “In order that through death, He might paralyze him that held the dominion of death – that is, the devil.” (Rotherham) In other words, after Jesus had put off from Himself the demon forces and the awful burden of guilt, sin, and sickness that He carried with Him down there, He grappled with Satan, conquered him, and left him paralyzed, whipped and defeated.¹⁰⁸

Romans 10:7 implies that Jesus in his death was in the ἄβυσσος. Copeland notes that in Revelation this word is used to refer to “the lowest regions of the underworld,” “the abode of demons, out of which they can be let loose.”¹⁰⁹ This may be true in Revelation, but to conclude that the word has precisely the same referent in Romans is illegitimate. Romans 10:7 itself simply interprets the abyss as the realm of the dead.

In conclusion to this subsection, there is no unequivocal biblical testimony that Jesus suffered at Satan’s hands, or indeed ‘met’ Satan in any way, while his body was lying in the grave. Indeed, to posit that Christ’s spirit was doing anything active at all while his body lay in the passivity of death requires a degree of anthropological dualism with which the New Testament is not consistently comfortable (see §3.2.5).

¹⁰⁶ Copeland, *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. by Colin Gunton, *The Actuality of Atonement* (London, New York: T&T Clark Ltd, 1988), p.55.

¹⁰⁸ Kenyon, *Wonderful Name*, p.9.

¹⁰⁹ Copeland, *Jesus Died Spiritually*, p.4; *Jesus In Hell*, p.2.

6.4.5 Conclusion to §6.4

This section has surveyed JDS teaching's implicit and explicit sources. As far as implicit sources are concerned, it has emerged that some early church atonement doctrine reached and influenced Kenyon, either by direct reading or through such intermediaries as Andrew Murray and A. B. Simpson. In contrast, Kenyon's ideas in this area did not arise from any alleged influence of New Thought or Christian Science on him. Turning now to Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's explicit sources (scriptural texts), it has become clear that the texts to which they refer do not support their distinctive ideas about Satan's authority over the world, Jesus' suffering in hell, or his being tortured there by Satan. In more general terms, however, their case that Jesus suffered at Satan's hands, and achieved a victory over him, remains to be considered. The following section will build an alternative case concerning this aspect of Christ's suffering, its relationship to his victory, and the timing of these events.

6.5 Alternative proposals

Much of the JDS teaching that has been considered in this chapter is to be rightly rejected. However, the rejection need not be total. For instance, although there is reason to refuse the portrayal of Satan's authority over the fallen world, those who see Satan as actively problematic for people seeking to serve God find much support for their view in the Bible and in Christian tradition. Furthermore, the idea that Jesus himself was confronted by Satan during his incarnation and yet achieved victory over him is easily supported from a variety of biblical texts and later Christian writers. It is feasible, therefore, that a case can be put forward concerning Christ's conflict with Satan that bears some resemblance to JDS teaching, but stands on a firmer theological foundation. The following aspects of such a case are considered in this section: Jesus' suffering at Satan's hands (§6.5.1); his victory over Satan (§6.5.2); and the timing of these events (§6.5.3).

6.5.1 Suffering at Satan's hands

The conclusion of §6.4, that Jesus did not have anything to do with Satan during the *triduum mortis*, does not mean that Jesus did not suffer at Satan's hands at all. There

is reason to believe that, in the eyes of some New Testament authors, such suffering occurred during Christ's final approach to death, even though it must be conceded immediately that New Testament depictions of the suffering of Christ do not include references to Satan with anything like the frequency found in JDS teaching. Given the worldview of the New Testament, it would hardly be surprising that Satan was presented as the instigator of Christ's suffering. After all, Satan is presented early on in the synoptic gospels as Christ's enemy, intent upon his downfall and the destruction of his mission (Matthew 4:3-11; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:3-13). And in Johannine literature, Christ's conflict with Satan is given as the very reason for the incarnation and its consequences (John 12:31; 1 John 3:8).

Added to this is the widespread New Testament theme of Christ's being 'handed over' (e.g. Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:10; Luke 18:32; John 18:30; Acts 2:23; Romans 4:25; 8:32¹¹⁰). In the gospels, this handing over is simply from one human to another, sometimes with the connotation of passing on not only the victim, but also the responsibility. In Acts and Romans, however, there is the sense of God's purpose lying behind the victimisation and death of Jesus. This accords with the mainly Johannine portrayal of a Jesus who consciously and willingly handed himself over to his enemies (John 10:11, 15, 17-18; 13:27b; 18:4-11; cf. Matthew 26:53-54; Mark 10:32, 45). In John's narrative, Jesus handed himself over, it would seem, not only to his human persecutors, but also to 'the prince of this world'. John 14:30-31 seems to indicate not only a knowledge on the part of Jesus that Satan would exercise some sway over him ("the ruler of this world is coming"), but also that Jesus gave himself to that sway for the sake of the fulfilment of his task ("He does not have anything in me, but I am doing just what the Father commanded me, so that the world may know..."). That Satan did indeed persecute Jesus, in Johannine eyes, is confirmed by the remark that Satan entered Judas prior to Judas' treachery (John 13:27a; 18:2). Luke testified to the same idea (22:3, 53).

The Johannine and Lukan idea that Satan played a part in causing Christ's suffering finds a possible echo in 1 Corinthians 2:8. According to this text, Jesus was crucified

¹¹⁰ Cf. Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:2, 25; 1 Peter 2:23, in which Jesus gave himself over, sacrificially and/or entrustingly, to God.

by “the rulers of this age.” These have been understood to be either human or demonic rulers. There are strong linguistic arguments for accepting that Paul’s primary reference was to human rulers.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, a number of recent commentators suggest that Paul might have had both categories of ruler in view: “In 2:6-9, Paul emphasizes the superhuman origin of the wisdom he preached, which prevails over the wisdom of all other powers, terrestrial and celestial.”¹¹²

In view of this Johannine, Lukan and possible Pauline testimony, Kenyon and Copeland are not progressing far beyond the Bible in stating that Satan persecuted and murdered Jesus.¹¹³ It is reasonable to suppose that, in the eyes of biblical authors, Satan was the instigator of human efforts to rid the world of Jesus.

Moving now from biblical witnesses to those of the later church, voices continue to be found that placed responsibility for Christ’s death at Satan’s feet. The views of Origen and Augustine have already been noted (§6.3). Despite Anselm’s assault on the place of Satan in the atonement,¹¹⁴ Aquinas was still able to follow Augustine and write of “the devil who in the passion of Christ overstepped the limits of the power allowed him by God, plotting the death of the sinless Christ.”¹¹⁵ Luther seems to have been alluding to the same idea when he wrote, “This is the wonderful wisdom of God, that He does not punish the ungodly except with their own stratagems, He mocks them with their own mockeries, He pierces them with their own javelins, as David did with Goliath and Christ did with the devil.”¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ The arguments are set out briefly but clearly by Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), pp.103-104, especially n.24.

¹¹² David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 2003), p.94; cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000), pp.237-238; Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987 [1983]), p.378.

¹¹³ Kenyon, *What Happened*, p.89: Satan “had stirred the selfish hearts of the High Priesthood until in a jealous frenzy they had crucified Him.” (It is necessary to note that, according to the canonised gospels, Jesus was crucified by Romans; Christ’s crucifixion was by no means a purely Jewish crime); Copeland, ‘Gates’, p.5. Kenyon and Copeland both understood 1 Corinthians 2:8 to refer to demons (Kenyon, *Bible*, p.59; Copeland, *What Satan Saw*, side 1; *Covenant*, p.10).

¹¹⁴ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?* I.7 ET Edward S. Prout (London: Religious Tract Society, n.d.) pp.43-47; cf. Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, pp.350-351.

¹¹⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 3a. 49, 3 (ET vol.54, p.101).

¹¹⁶ Luther, ‘Psalm Seven’, *First Lectures on the Psalms* (LW 10, p.86).

Coming to Barth in the twentieth century, Satan, however Barth understood that entity,¹¹⁷ played a part in the crucifixion. Barth wanted to take the biblical language of ransom and victory seriously.¹¹⁸ Satan, as Barth understood the gospels, was active in Gethsemane and beyond. In stark evocative language, Barth wrote that death was the only answer Jesus received to his Gethsemane prayer:

The will of God was done as the will of Satan was done. The answer of God was identical with the action of Satan. That was the frightful thing. The coincidence of the divine and the satanic will and work and word was the problem of this hour, the darkness in which Jesus addressed God in Gethsemane.¹¹⁹

Satan was thereby acting as “upheld by the left hand of God.”¹²⁰ But in this act, Satan also experienced his downfall.¹²¹

Thus from Origen in the third century to Barth in the twentieth, there can be discerned a plausible thread of affirmation that Satan played a part in the death of Christ. There is of course no need to accept all that JDS teaching proposes concerning this role. In particular, Satan’s participation can be understood as less direct than JDS teaching suggests. It is unnecessary to imagine that Satan attacked Jesus apart from human agency. Rather, it is sufficient to see Satan successfully tempting Judas, and no doubt others, to perform ungodly deeds against Christ. It is also reasonable to conclude that, if Satan was inflicting pain on Jesus, then Jesus was in some albeit indirect way under his influence or power. (There need be no suggestion at all in this assertion that Jesus obeyed Satan’s commands.) These ideas are not only plausible, but also useful in forming a backdrop to discussion concerning Christ’s victory over Satan, to which discussion this chapter now turns.

6.5.2 Victory over Satan

There is no doubt that the idea that Christ in his death achieved a victory over Satan can be traced back to the New Testament. Reference need only be made to Hebrews

¹¹⁷ For Barth, Satan and demons were not creatures, but real manifestations of the ‘nothingness’ at enmity with God (*CD* III/3, pp.520-524); cf. Henri Blocher, ‘*Agnus Victor*: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment’, pp.67-91 in John G. Stackhouse, Jr., ed., *What does it Mean to be Saved?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), p.72, n.15.

¹¹⁸ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.274.

¹¹⁹ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.268.

¹²⁰ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.267.

¹²¹ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.272.

2:14. (However, it is probably the case for most New Testament authors that Christ's incarnation, death, burial and resurrection taken as a whole was the pivotal event that overcame Satan [e.g. Acts 10:38; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 John 3:8]). Furthermore, Christ's victory over Satan has been declared and celebrated throughout Christian history as an important aspect of his atoning work.¹²² It is therefore unarguable that JDS teaching is 'orthodox' in this declaration at least.

However, difficulties and questions are created by JDS teaching's particular articulation of Christ's victory over Satan. One difficulty is that neither Kenyon nor Copeland offers a satisfactory account as to how Christ's suffering at Satan's hands is meant to achieve his victory over him.¹²³ Classical ransom theories supplied an answer to this question, but it is not an answer that Kenyon followed, and it has been found wanting by subsequent theology. Other explanations must be sought. It was identified in §6.2.1 that, for Kenyon, Christ simply vanquished Satan in a display of raw power, returned to him through his spiritual resurrection. Then in §6.2.3 it emerged that, for Copeland, Christ's domination by Satan was illegal, and effectively trapped Satan. Neither explanation is satisfactory. Kenyon's leaves the events preceding Christ's spiritual resurrection devoid of any purpose in achieving victory. Copeland's explanation is more similar to ransom theories than Kenyon's. However, there is no emphasis on Jesus as bait; it is the illegality of Satan's act that traps him. Given that all of Satan's rebellion is by definition offensive to God and therefore presumably 'illegal', it is hard to see why this one illegality should lead to his downfall in a way that is not true of all the others.¹²⁴

Gustav Aulén, in his enthusiastic representation of classical theories, characterised them as declaring that "Christ – Christus Victor – fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants' under which mankind is in bondage and

¹²² This is true despite the effect Anselm's and Abelard's teaching had on earlier atonement theories. For vastly different evaluations of Anselm and Abelard, see Rashdall, *Idea of the Atonement*, pp.350, 358-359 and Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor* ET A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1970 [1931]), pp.86-87, 96.

¹²³ Hagin's view is not discussed here, for, as indicated in §6.2.2, he did not state that Satan caused Christ's hellish suffering.

¹²⁴ JDS teaching's counter-claim, that Satan's acquisition of authority over the earth was legal, for Adam 'sold' it to him of his own free will, does not explain the deceit involved in Adam and Eve's serpentine temptation.

suffering, and in him God reconciles the world to Himself.”¹²⁵ Here another answer is proffered. If Satan caused Christ suffering, it arose as ‘the scars of war’ in their struggle with one another, a struggle in which Satan lost, and humanity was saved. Unfortunately, this explanation will not suffice either. Incidentally, it is not an accurate representation of early church beliefs, in which God was presented as the winner – *Deus Victor* – and Christ as the passive victim of Satan’s cruelty, a cruelty through which God organised his downfall. Christ was not involved in active combat with Satan. More particularly, Aulén’s presentation does not reflect the life and death of Christ as portrayed in the gospels or understood in the epistles. Jesus did not fight. He most certainly did not retaliate against his human persecutors. As far as satanic persecutors were concerned, there is no evidence that he fought against them either. There is none in the gospels. In John, Jesus cast out the prince of this world not by fighting against him but by *giving in* to the arrest by Judas’ accomplices that Satan had implicitly inspired Judas to arrange. In the epistles, Jesus overcame the devil (Hebrews 2:14; cf. Colossians 2:15 if ‘rulers and authorities’ are demonic), but did so precisely by dying, not by fighting.¹²⁶

Among those who accept penal substitutionary atonement, Blocher, closely followed by Strange, suggests that the answer lies in the Devil’s primary function as accuser.¹²⁷ Because people have sinned against God, they are open to accusation of their sins from Satan. As God is just, this is a real weapon. Blocher goes so far as to state that God’s justice is Satan’s main weapon.¹²⁸ Only once human sin is expiated, through penal substitutionary atonement, does Satan lose his ammunition. Thus he is defeated. This is certainly a more useful attempt to answer the question than that

¹²⁵ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, p.4.

¹²⁶ F. F. Bruce, in his reading of Colossians 2:15 (*The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* [NICNT. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984], pp.110-111), fell into the same misunderstanding as Aulén:

The very instrument of disgrace and death by which the hostile forces thought they had him in their grasp and had conquered him forever was turned by him into the instrument of their defeat and disablement. As he was suspended there, bound hand and foot to the wood in apparent weakness, they imagined they had him at their mercy, and flung themselves on him with hostile intent. But, far from suffering their attack without resistance, he grappled with them and mastered them, stripping them of the armor in which they trusted, and held them aloft in his outstretched hands, displaying to the universe their helplessness and his own unvanquished strength. Such seems to be the picture painted in these words.

¹²⁷ Blocher, ‘*Agnus Victor*’; Strange, ‘Many-splendoured Cross’, pp.15-17.

¹²⁸ Blocher, ‘*Agnus Victor*’, p.84.

offered by JDS teaching. However, it is reductionist and anthropocentric. It may explain how Satan no longer, after the atonement, has grounds to accuse sinful humans, but it does not explain how Satan is destroyed.

Perhaps the answer lies in paradox. Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament handed himself over, and in this God handed him over, to sinful people; it was because he *resisted* people and their evil (non-violently), refusing to lower himself morally to their hypocritical ways but showing them up by his resistance, that he was arrested and died. Paradoxically, he *overcame* them – though only the eye of faith can see the victory – by *not* fighting their battles at their level.¹²⁹ By extension, with Copeland, Jesus handed himself over to Satan (he did not resist Judas, for example); paradoxically, he thereby succeeded in resisting Satan. He had already resisted the wilderness temptations and resisted the people Satan inspired (e.g. in John 8:33-59). In his handing himself over, he pivotally, crucially, expressed his resistance – his refusal to escape; his refusal to retaliate; his refusal to give in to self-pity (the evangelists allude to Christ’s continuing concern for others in Luke 23:34 and John 19:26). Thus, in both giving in to, and paradoxically refusing to give in to, Satan, he conquered him. He won by not fighting. By not ‘lowering’ himself to Satan’s level, he proved crucially and finally that Satan had no hold on him. Satan thus lost in his battle with Christ, and his power was overcome. As with the human victory, only the eye of faith can see this. Only the eschaton will bring the victory to the view of all.

6.5.3 The timing of Christ’s suffering and victory

It has become clear that no good biblical case can be made that Christ suffered during the *triduum mortis*, still less that he did so at Satan’s hands. Such ideas are not only effectively denied by the Bible’s silence, but also dismissed by the largely consistent testimony of historical theology. Irenaeus seems to have believed that the *triduum* was a time of blessed waiting for resurrection, insofar as he believed this experience of Christ to have been mirrored by his disciples’ later time between death

¹²⁹ Gunton, *Actuality*, p.77, while discussing Christ’s suffering, refers to a “submission which consists in a refusal to submit.” It can equally be said that there is a refusal to submit that consists in submission.

and eschatological resurrection.¹³⁰ Augustine took Acts 2:27 as evidence that Jesus descended to hell, but stated that he did not suffer there. In fact, while Augustine implied that Satan punished people in hell, he also implied that Satan found nothing in Jesus deserving punishment (if “the prince and captain of death” referred to Satan).¹³¹ Aquinas believed that Christ overcame Satan before descending to hell.¹³² Luther was somewhat equivocal. He referred to the view, not his own, that during the *triduum*, in Christ’s words, “the torments of Belial, or the devil, confounded Me (that is, strong devils have utterly terrified Me in death).” In possible denial of this view, he wrote, “I do not know how anyone could explain this statement.” His own position followed:

I firmly believe that Christ did not feel the punishments and griefs of the damned, who are the children of despair, but that Christ always hoped. Nevertheless, these words [Psalm 18:5] testify that He was not altogether without grief. And if there had been no other griefs, yet because He was held by the ropes and in the power of death and hell, this in itself was without doubt loathsome and irksome to His most noble soul, for without putting off the substance He desired freedom and His own brilliant glorification. Yet it is exceedingly rash to deny that His soul was held captive in hell and to go against so clear a Bible passage.

Having said all of that, he continued quickly to concede that those who disagreed with him could, if they preferred, follow Augustine’s view.¹³³ It is well known that Calvin ‘demythologised’ the phrase in the creeds referring to Christ’s descent into hell: this referred, for Calvin, to the hell of the cross, not to journeys of the soul while the body lay dead.¹³⁴

Turning to the twentieth century, Barth captured the thoughts of both Luther and Calvin in this regard: Christ suffered hell in his dying and in his being dead. However, more than Luther, Barth withdrew from any suggestion that in death Christ

¹³⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.XXXI.2 (*ANF* I, p.560). That Irenaeus also believed that Christ preached during the *triduum* has already been noted (§6.3).

¹³¹ Augustine, *Letters* CLXIV (*NPNF* I.I, pp.515-517, quoting p.516). He believed that in the *triduum* Jesus was both in paradise (in his Godhead) and in hell (in his soul).

¹³² Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 3a.52.1 (ET vol.54, p.155). Aquinas did, however, see soteriological value in Christ’s descent: “Man had merited by his sins not only the death of his body but also his own descent into hell [*inferos*]. If then Christ died in order to free us from death, it was fitting that he descend into hell in order to deliver us from going down to hell.”

¹³³ Luther, ‘Psalm Eighteen’, *First Lectures on the Psalms* (*LW* 10, pp.115-116). Elsewhere he wrote of Jesus: “what He did or felt after leaving the body we, of course, do not know.” He went on to decry wasted speculation about what Christ’s soul did in the *triduum mortis* (commenting on Genesis 42:38 [*LW* 7, pp.302-303]).

¹³⁴ Calvin, *Institutes* II.XVI.10 (ET vol.I, p.443).

experienced ongoing conscious suffering; his monistic anthropology would not have allowed him to. Instead, while the hell of the cross was divine wrath, “alienation from God”, “an annihilatingly painful existence in opposition to Him,”¹³⁵ the ‘abyss’ of death was “the cessation of being and nothingness.”¹³⁶ Thus for Barth there was no journey to hades where Jesus would meet Satan: Matthew 12:40, for instance, simply served to emphasise “the actual event of His death.”¹³⁷

There is therefore no need to place the suffering of Christ after his physical death. In fact there is every reason not to do so. If Christ suffered at human, satanic, and even, arguably, divine, hands in his dying, his suffering surely came to an end as he expired. If, with Barth,¹³⁸ one interprets the New Testament witness in terms of an anthropological monism, then Christ or any human, when dead, could experience precisely nothing, good or bad. If on the other hand one accepts some degree of dualistic anthropology, Luke 23:43 can be understood to indicate that Christ was blessed during the *triduum mortis* in paradise. Whichever is preferred, the New Testament accounts make sense without the adumbration of mythological speculations concerning a suffering Christ during the *triduum*. JDS teaching’s understanding of the timing of Christ’s suffering at Satan’s hands is untrue to the New Testament and not beneficial in seeking to understand the atonement.

6.5.4 Conclusions to §6.5

This section has sought to offer an alternative reading of Christ’s suffering at Satan’s hands to that presented by JDS teaching. In so doing, it has continued to evaluate JDS doctrine’s presentation of this matter. In summary, JDS teaching is right to declare that Christ suffered in this way, although there is no need to see Satan’s activity as impinging directly on Christ, rather than through human agency. Secondly, JDS teaching is in accord with both biblical and ecclesial witnesses in declaring that Jesus won a victory over Satan in his atoning work. However, JDS doctrine completely fails to offer any worthy explanation as to how Jesus’ suffering

¹³⁵ Barth, *CD* III/2, p.603.

¹³⁶ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.215.

¹³⁷ Barth, *CD* IV/I, p.268.

¹³⁸ Barth, *CD* III/2, p.350.

and his victory are linked causally. An understanding of the events that recognises their paradoxical nature is helpful here. Jesus handed himself over to Satan's power and torture, at least indirectly. In so doing, he paradoxically resisted Satan and so broke his power, as will become evident to all at the eschaton. Finally, JDS teaching misplaces Christ's suffering at Satan's hands temporally. It did not occur during the *triduum mortis*, but was over once Jesus expired.

6.6 Chapter conclusions

6.6.1 Summary

This chapter has explored the belief, inherent to JDS teaching, that Jesus, while 'spiritually dead', was Satan's prey. §6.2 analysed the views of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland. Hagin offered the least strident account, apparently drawing back from an uncomplicated avowal that Jesus was at Satan's mercy, and not ascribing Jesus' suffering in hell to Satan. However, Kenyon and Copeland are not hesitant in declaring that Jesus was held completely in Satan's grasp for three days, and suffered satanic agonies in the process. For Copeland alone, this is an illegal move that traps Satan and leads to his defeat. §6.3 surveyed the responses of critics, indicating that they are aware of similarities between it and older ransom theories. In response, the degree of similarity with ransom theories was noted, as was, however, a significant degree of contrast. The similarity supplied some indirect explanation for the genesis of Kenyon's particular ideas. §6.4's survey of possible sources for this aspect of JDS teaching demonstrated that both the early church's ideas and those of Higher Life and Faith Cure teaching may have contributed to Kenyon's construct, while New Thought and Christian Science did not. New Testament texts, however, were not found to support distinctive JDS conclusions. In §6.5, some agreement with JDS teaching was suggested, particularly to the idea that Jesus did indeed suffer at Satan's hands, those 'hands' being the agency of misled humans. Also, it was agreed that Christ won a victory over Satan. This could be causally linked to his suffering by seeing a paradoxical resistance to and breaking of Satan's power in the very act of submitting to his torture. Disagreement, however, was expressed with the idea that Christ suffered during the *triduum mortis*. His agonies occurred in the events leading up to and including the crucifixion, not beyond it.

6.6.2 Implications

There is much in this overall aspect of JDS teaching, that Jesus became Satan's prey, which is worthy to be rejected. Nevertheless, its value, however small, is that it highlights the unpalatable but inescapable idea that Jesus was, temporarily, at Satan's 'mercy' and suffered thereby. This aspect of Christ's suffering can be understood as an element within the whole experience of physical, psychological, spiritual and social pain that Jesus went through in his dying. For those who see saving value in the suffering and death of Christ, the victory that Jesus won through his non-resistant suffering reached its climax in his victory over Satan himself.

This recognition has implications for Christians – those who see themselves as 'in Christ'. The Christian is called to walk Christ's path, to carry his or her own cross and to participate – proleptically in this life and fully in the one to come – in the victory that Christ won in his death and resurrection. For JDS teaching, participation in Christ here and now means only enjoying his victory, for the suffering has been endured on our behalf by Christ, and is over. However, it is more worthwhile to see a tension between suffering and victory, and to expect the paradox of Christ's own suffering to be replicated in that of his followers. Christians may suffer, but their God-given ability to do so without retaliation or violent resistance, without 'stooping' to the level of their antagonists, will achieve a victory, the outworking of which may be invisible to human eyes in this life, but which will be enjoyed throughout eternity.

6.6.3 Key observations

If, among its three aspects, JDS doctrine's view concerning a separation of the crucified Christ from God holds the most in common with traditional Christianity (chapter 4), and its belief that he partook of a satanic nature holds the least (chapter 5), then the focus of this chapter, that he became Satan's prey, comes between those extremes. Although biblical testimony does not support the details of the JDS exposition, the more general depiction of Satan's aggression against Jesus is supported from within the Bible, the first millennium church, and Kenyon's

‘orthodox’ contemporary sources. However, the distinctive parts of this aspect of JDS teaching seem to result from Kenyon’s creativity rather than directly from his sources. However impressive the imaginativeness of this creativity may be to some, the resulting construct does not add helpfully to Christian understanding of Christ’s victory over Satan, which understanding can be developed without recourse to JDS teaching.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter aims to summarise and draw together material presented in the preceding six. §7.2 summarises previous findings (§7.2.1), implications (§7.2.2), and key observations (§7.2.3). As set out at the end of the thesis' introduction (p.4), the concluding subsections to each chapter entitled 'key observations', and therefore the summarised key observations in §7.2.3, focus on those aspects of this thesis which present original material and thereby significantly advance the debate concerning JDS teaching. In doing so, §7.2.3 offers a response to one of the most significant criticisms of JDS doctrine made in the debate, that the teaching, like so much that is promulgated within the Word-faith movement, owes its origins not to 'orthodox' Christianity, but to the 'heterodox' ideas prevalent in New Thought and Christian Science.

§7.3 offers some further responses to those charges laid against JDS doctrine by its main critics. It considers whether JDS doctrine can fairly be labelled as 'heresy' (§7.3.1), whether the standpoint of these critics is itself in danger of presenting a reductionist account of the suffering and death of Christ (§7.3.2), and finally whether JDS teaching has become increasingly bizarre and dangerous as it has passed from Kenyon to its more recent proponents (§7.3.3).

Thereafter, two brief sections close the thesis. §7.4 offers two sets of sundry observations, concerning semantic considerations (§7.4.1) and the *triduum mortis* (§7.4.2). Finally, §7.5 presents an overall appraisal of JDS teaching.

7.2 Summaries

7.2.1 Summary of research findings

The teaching that Jesus 'died spiritually', as first expounded by Kenyon, now finds its home in the controversial Word-faith movement, notably in the teaching of Hagin and Copeland. Kenyon, Hagin, and Copeland employ a relatively small number of biblical texts to agree that to state that Jesus 'died spiritually' is to aver that Jesus was separated from God, participated in a sinful, satanic nature, and became Satan's

prey. This teaching has proved highly controversial, with many voices raised against it. Critics of the doctrine have largely focused on countering JDS teaching's reading of biblical teaching, and on seeking Kenyon's thinking in New Thought and Christian Science.

The claim that Jesus 'died spiritually' cannot rely on the scriptural texts which gain the attention of the JDS teachers, such as Isaiah 53:9 or 1 Timothy 3:16. 1 Peter 3:18 is also an uncertain foundation. Neither, however, does the teaching arise from statements in New Thought or Christian Science. Instead, if any source is to be identified, it is in Higher Life and Faith Cure, for instance from Henry Mabie, though this too is far from certain. Those outside JDS teaching who *have* taught a 'spiritual death' of Christ have meant by this only that he was separated from God. Kenyon's other entailed meanings are absent from wider Christian theology. JDS doctrine's position is not only that Jesus 'died spiritually': he *had* to do so to atone for human sin. This idea rests on a stark pneumocentric anthropological trichotomism which is not biblically defensible, though it is detectable in Higher Life and Faith Cure writing.

Of the three ideas integral to Christ's 'spiritual death' in JDS teaching, his alleged separation from God occurred as God the Father turned away from the sin that Christ the Son had become. It was evidenced, for example, in the 'cry of dereliction' and in 2 Corinthians 5:21. The JDS understanding of the cry is not impossible, but it is neither necessary nor certain. It regards as clear that which is rare and ambiguous. Also, it fails to hold postulation of a separation in tension with avowals of the unity of the Father and the crucified Son.

The second integral idea, that Christ in his 'spiritual death' partook of a sinful, satanic nature, finds no clear precursor in the Bible (for example, John 3:14 and 2 Corinthians 5:21) or in Kenyon's contemporary sources. Comparison with Irving's teaching about the sinful nature of the incarnate Christ also identifies considerable differences. Finally, and in contrast, the belief that Christ in his dying became Satan's prey was found to echo partially teaching in both the first millennium church

and in Higher Life and Faith Cure. Furthermore, it approximates, though only loosely, to a biblical perspective that Satan played an indirect role in Christ's suffering, and thereby met his own downfall.

In overall summary, then, JDS teaching's claim to represent biblical teaching accurately is of variable merit. The idea of a separation of Jesus from God can possibly build on gospel material, as can, more reliably, Satan's part in Christ's sufferings. On the other hand, the idea of Christ's participation in Satan's nature is without biblical support. Similarly, while the ideas of Jesus' being separated from God and becoming Satan's prey have roots in early Christianity and in Higher Life and Faith Cure, as well as elsewhere, that of Jesus partaking in a satanic nature is original to Kenyon, is least helpful, and is most problematic.

7.2.2 Summary of implications

The first implication relates to the debate concerning JDS doctrine. Debate has been limited, and further research therefore warranted. Not only has study of biblical texts tended to be atomistic, but study of both New Thought and Christian Science, and Higher Life and Faith Cure has been methodologically lax, and little application of historical theology has appeared. This project has grasped the ensuing opportunity for methodological development. The broadening of method which this project has brought to the debate has furthered discussion considerably.

A first implication arising from study of JDS teaching itself is the importance of anthropology as a prerequisite for this discussion about Christ's death. While the descriptive elements of JDS teaching might survive a transition from their own anthropological presumptions to another milieu, the prescriptive element does not. In other words, one has to accept JDS teachers' claim that 'You *are* a spirit, you *have* a soul, and you *live in* a body' in order to begin to take seriously their equal claim that without some distinctly 'spiritual' element to Christ's death, atonement is impossible. Clearly, many would balk at such an anthropological formulation, and with good reason.

A second set of implications arises from observing that the teaching that Jesus was separated from God the Father is not held in tension with a recognition that he was concurrently united intimately with God. If Jesus' divinity is claimed in this unbalanced separation, then the trinity seems to disintegrate into tritheism. Contrastingly, if Jesus' divinity is minimised or denied in the separation, the incarnationism underlying this depiction seems to present a Christ in whom the natures are all too readily separable. Furthermore, the presentation does not strongly guard against the idea of separate purposes in the minds of Christ the Son and God the Father.

Thirdly, important questions for JDS teaching emanate from its view that Christ partook of the satanic nature. Did Christ maintain his divinity in this experience? What, if any, was his uniqueness as a human? Was the atoning work of the cross a truly divine work? On the other hand, fourthly, the JDS portrayal of Christ's suffering at the hands of Satan, while needing to be considerably reworked, offers some potential for exploring both the victory of Christ over evil, and the opportunity afforded to others to share in this victory.

In summary, JDS doctrine struggles to articulate its relationship with the traditional forms of trinitarianism, incarnation, and substitutionary atonement to which it claims to adhere. Furthermore, it rests upon a distinct satanology and anthropology that have poor biblical support and are unlikely to win many adherents. That which is problematic outweighs that which offers potential for fruitful theological thought.

7.2.3 Summary of key observations

Much debate concerning JDS doctrine has already occurred. Most voices have been critical, although a few have dissented from that line. Among the critics, there is no doubt that a key contributor to the debate is Dan McConnell, whose voice cannot be ignored. His most significant contributions are his indisputable identification of widespread dependence of Hagin on Kenyon, and his much more controvertible assertion that Kenyon was in turn dependent on New Thought and Christian Science. In the case of the latter assertion, his comparative methods are weak. A comparison

is necessary not only between Kenyon and New Thought and Christian Science on the one hand, but also between Kenyon and his 'orthodox' sources in the Higher Life and Faith Cure movements on the other. Some more recent debaters, such as Simmons and Perriman, succeed in comparing Kenyon both with New Thought and Christian Science, and with Higher Life and Faith Cure, but only in general terms. This thesis applies such comparisons specifically and in detail to JDS teaching. It seeks commonalities, significantly lacking common ground, and overt contrasts. In doing so, it demonstrates that the doctrine was not present in incipient or full form in New Thought or Christian Science. McConnell was misleading when he averred that what he called Kenyon's 'spiritualisation' of Christ's death implied what was explicit in New Thought and Christian Science. However, neither was JDS teaching apparent, in the form Kenyon expounded, in Higher Life or Faith Cure. Nevertheless, incipient aspects were. In particular, voices in these groups occasionally made reference to the crucified Christ's separation from God, and to certain motifs present in Kenyon's portrayal of Christ as Satan's prey.

Turning now to the three aspects of JDS doctrine which occupy the attention of chapters 4 to 6 of this thesis, it is clear that the JDS portrayal of the crucified Christ's separation from God is the least controversial facet of the teaching. It presents a possible, though not necessary, reading of scriptural texts, a reading held in common with certain theological voices outside the Word-faith movement. In particular, among Kenyon's 'orthodox' contemporary sources, this view of Jesus' death was held by the Higher Life and Faith Cure advocates, and friends of one another, A. J. Gordon and Henry C. Mabie. As discussed in chapter 4, this understanding of Jesus' death is not above criticism, but whatever criticisms are to be levelled against it must also be aimed at any other version of Christian teaching which makes the same claims.

In contrast to the idea of Jesus being separated from God while crucified, the claim that at the same time he also participated in a sinful, satanic nature is undoubtedly the most suspect aspect of JDS doctrine. It well illustrates the capacity of JDS teaching to rest significant themes on slender biblical evidence, and to offer wayward exegesis

of that evidence in reaching its conclusions. At the same time, it highlights the creativity of Kenyon's thinking. Whatever meagre portions of his synthesis were available to Kenyon among his sources, he reworked them quite extensively in developing his conclusions, and most extensively at this point.

The third aspect of JDS doctrine under study, that Jesus in his death became Satan's prey, presents middle ground between the first two, in terms of the extent to which it departs from traditional Christian themes and assertions. The sometimes lurid details of Kenyon's, Hagin's and Copeland's representations of Satan's role in Christ's suffering and death are neither necessary nor helpful in the attempt to understand that death's role in God's victory over Satan. Nevertheless, distinct commonalities are traceable between this aspect of JDS teaching and facets of Christian 'ransom' theories both in the first millennium church and among Kenyon's possible 'orthodox' sources. That Kenyon maintained these beliefs is unsurprising. That he built on them with his characteristic creativity, and with the results noted in chapter 6, is lamentable.

7.3 Further responses to the critics

7.3.1 Charges of Heresy

As noted in §1.2.2, a number of commentators conclude that JDS doctrine is 'heretical'. In offering definitions of heresy, Hanegraaff, Smail, Walker and Wright, and Bowman refer to the creeds: heresy is teaching which opposes or contradicts "the basic core truths of creedal Christianity."¹ At first sight, appeal to creeds may seem crucial, at least in respect of Kenyon, for he implied an anti-creedal stance, writing, "Men have faith in Creeds, in Organizations, in their Church..." and "The Church has kept this 'Samson' [the Christian] imprisoned by false teachings and by creeds and doctrines."² However, Kenyon was not being anti-creedal as such. He was criticising the church for failing to practise fully what it (ought to have, in his view) believed.

¹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.46; Smail, Walker and Wright, 'Revelation Knowledge', pp.58-60 (quoting p.58); Bowman (*Controversy*, pp.225-226) refers back to his earlier work, *Orthodoxy* for definitions: cf. *Orthodoxy*, esp. pp.49f, 59-67, 80.

² Kenyon, *Two Kinds of Faith*, p.22; *Presence*, p.61.

In fact, despite the confidence of these commentators' verdicts, it is difficult to categorise JDS teaching as heretical on the basis of historic creeds. The original Nicene creed merely stated that Christ "for the sake of us men and for the sake of our salvation came down and was enfleshed, became man, suffered and rose again on the third day..."³ Even in its expanded form after the Council of Constantinople its detail was not substantially greater: Christ "was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried..."⁴ The apostles' creed is fuller: Christ "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended to the dead."⁵ Even so, there is no statement in this cursory coverage of Christ's work that JDS opposes or contradicts. Indeed, it might be argued that JDS teaching offers a fuller account of a 'descent' than do many presentations.

Bowman's definitions of and tests for heresy, however, go beyond reference to creeds: doctrines should also be tested by comparison with the Bible, the gospel, and the teaching of the church catholic.⁶ On this count, JDS teaching fares worse. There is clearly little support from either biblical material or the historic deliberations of the church to support JDS distinctives. Thus, by Bowman's definition, it is necessary to conclude that these more unusual aspects of JDS teaching are 'heretical'. Nevertheless, other aspects, though unsophisticated, cannot be dismissed in this way. It is an oversimplification to reject the whole of JDS doctrine with the cry of "heresy!"⁷

7.3.2 Dangers of reductionism

In criticising JDS doctrine, Hanegraaff, McConnell, and Bowman display a considerable reductionism in their accounts of Jesus' suffering. Only the physical is

³ As quoted in J. Burnaby, *The Belief of Christendom: a Commentary on the Nicene Creed* (London: SPCK, 1959), pp.5-6.

⁴ As quoted in Burnaby, *Belief*, p.iii.

⁵ As quoted in Alister E. McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp.xx-xxi.

⁶ Bowman, *Orthodoxy*, ch.7.

⁷ Bowman's verdict of Word-faith teaching as a whole, that it is "suborthodox and aberrant" (p.227) more usefully characterises JDS doctrine in particular than Bowman's own earlier declaration that the latter is "heretical" (p.176).

acknowledged, both as historical datum and as soteriologically significant.⁸ Although Hanegraaff offers a worthwhile critique of JDS teaching at this point, asking: “why is it that Christ Himself told us to remember the sacrifice He made with His body and blood (both of which are essentially physical), while saying nothing about any spiritual sacrifice...?” he is surely premature in his next comment: “All the biblical evidence indicates that Jesus never died spiritually and that His physical death paid the price for humanity’s sin.”⁹ No acknowledgement is offered here that Christ’s death involved rejection, or that it was the death of a criminal. Neither is any consideration given to the possibility that these non-physical aspects might be soteriologically significant.

The reductionism evident in the critics’ work illustrates a problem with anthropological dualism when applied to Christ’s death. The dualism of JDS teaching highlights the ‘spiritual death’ of Christ and minimises the physical. Some critics effectively do the opposite. A more monistic anthropology at this point succeeds in ‘not dividing what God has joined together’. A full, rounded view of Christ’s death, if it identifies atoning significance in it, might simply see that significance in Christ’s ‘whole’ death, rather than one ‘compartment’ of it. Here, monists such as Barth and Balthasar will be on firmer ground.

7.3.3 Comparisons between Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland

It emerged in §§5.3 and 6.2 that, in regard to Christ’s ‘spiritual death’ as participating in a satanic nature and becoming Satan’s prey, Kenyon and Copeland offer similar presentations, and Hagin holds back from their full-blooded statements, offering instead a somewhat toned down version. The differences are not substantial. Nevertheless, they contradict, at least in respect of JDS teaching, the claim that the ‘heresy’ has gained strength from generation to generation, becoming more and more grotesque as it has been passed in turn from Kenyon to Hagin and from Hagin to Copeland.¹⁰ In fact, as Copeland gives little indication of his non-biblical sources, it seems likely, given his similarity to Kenyon as against Hagin, that Copeland has

⁸ E.g. Bowman, *Controversy*, p.165; McConnell, *Promise*, p.129.

⁹ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, pp.161-162.

¹⁰ Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, p.31; Bowman, *Controversy*, p.225.

simply read Kenyon for himself. If he is aware of the differences between Kenyon and Hagin, he has chosen to approximate his own views to the former.

7.4 Sundry observations

7.4.1 Semantic considerations

Is it useful to speak of Jesus ‘dying spiritually’, whatever might be meant by the phrase? Noting Saussure’s observation that words as signifiers have an arbitrary relationship with the mental concepts so signified,¹¹ one must concede that Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland on the one hand and the wider Christian world on the other are entitled to use ‘JDS terminology’ in explicating the sufferings of Christ, provided that they explain what they refer to by such terms. However, language use, while essentially arbitrary, is powerfully driven by convention. Certain socio-linguistic conventions surrounding the phrase ‘Jesus died spiritually’ detract from the value of its use in Christian formulations.

First, as §3.4 indicated, the wider Christian world has displayed no great appetite to express its beliefs concerning Christ’s sufferings in the words ‘Jesus died spiritually’. Given the frequency with which JDS teachers use the term, and the centrality of this language in their expressions of Christ’s atoning work, it is reasonable to conclude that, with few exceptions, the term largely belongs to the teaching. Furthermore, on the rare occasions when other Christians have used the term, they have not referred to all the concepts that JDS teaching involves. If JDS teaching becomes increasingly widespread and familiar, JDS terminology is likely to be used less and less by others who disagree with at least part of what JDS teachers refer to by the term. Unless new factors arise to alter the situation, JDS terminology may become limited entirely to use by JDS teachers. A likely result will be that, in the eyes of many, the meanings of JDS phraseology will become equally restricted to those intended by JDS teachers.¹² It will thus become more and more advisable for Christians who do not agree with any or all of JDS doctrine’s distinctives to eschew the term, to avoid the possibility of being misunderstood.

¹¹ Paul Cobley and Litza Jansz, *Introducing Semiotics* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1999), p.13.

¹² “In the majority of cases the meaning of a word is its *use*” (Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996], p.330, referring to the work of Wittgenstein).

Secondly, JDS terminology connotes, in the minds of some, concepts foreign to JDS doctrine itself. To certain readers, ‘death’ means cessation of existence. Judith Matta, for instance, believes that, if Jesus ‘died spiritually’, there must have been a short time when God, or one of the persons of the Trinity, did not exist. Referring to her understanding of JDS doctrine’s depiction of the resurrected Christ, Matta writes:

This new Jesus, a Born-Again Man at the right hand of God, did not exist while on earth. God the Son, a reiteration of Adam, ceased to exist. He was sacrificed – “died out” if you will – and another being was brought into existence in the pit of Hell... If there, at some point in time, was no God the Son, Second Person of the Trinity, did the Trinity cease to be Triune in its Godhead? The Trinity itself, would reflect the Duality of Gnostic thought! Logically, this must be so. However, these teachers would never verbalize such a thought because (hopefully!) cries of “Heresy!” would greet their words.¹³

This certainly misunderstands JDS teaching’s position, which explicitly denies that ‘spiritual death’ is the cessation of existence.¹⁴ However, it does indicate that JDS terminology is unhelpful for some, if cessation of existence is a natural inference that they draw from JDS language. While this misunderstanding is not widespread among critics, it might be more likely among those holding to annihilationist views of hell, who interpret ‘second death’ (Revelation 20:6, 14), and therefore perhaps ‘spiritual death’, as cessation of existence. Kenyon explicitly denied annihilationism,¹⁵ and many Pentecostal denominations deny it in their statements of belief,¹⁶ but a proportion of evangelical authors espouse it.¹⁷ Given this breadth of evangelical ideas about hell, references to Jesus’ ‘dying spiritually’ might only serve to confuse. For this reason it would also be advisable for JDS teachers themselves to cease use of JDS terminology, and find other words with which to express their views concerning the sufferings of Christ.

¹³ Matta, *Born Again Jesus*, pp.58-59.

¹⁴ E.g. Hagin, *Name*, p.30.

¹⁵ Kenyon, *Father*, p.118.

¹⁶ See Hollenweger, *Pentecostals*, pp.514-521.

¹⁷ E.g. John Stott in David L. Edwards and John Stott, *Essentials* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), pp.314-320; Wright, *Evangelical*, pp.88-94 (modified annihilationism).

7.4.2 The *triduum mortis*

When JDS teaching projects Christ's suffering beyond Good Friday and into Holy Saturday, it seems not to reflect the New Testament. Perhaps, then, the New Testament understood the agony of *dying* rather than the state of *being* dead as of primary atoning significance. If so, a question is raised about the purpose (if there was one) of the *triduum mortis*. The New Testament authors offer no explanation as to why Jesus stayed dead the length of time he did. The burial is clearly important to early Christian testimony (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:4), and no doubt emphasised the fact that Jesus was indeed dead, but the only application of that significance, to baptism (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12), does not suggest any intrinsic importance to the length of time Christ was dead.

One must be careful to avoid undue speculation in the absence of data. Nevertheless, the answer to the question, "What was Holy Saturday *for*?" might lie in the answer to the prior question, "What happened on Holy Saturday?" This seems to be, "Nothing." It was, after all, the *Sabbath*. Given the silence, stillness and passivity of death, that Saturday is best seen as a hiatus, a marker not only temporally between death and resurrection, but also eschatologically between unrenewed earthly life and the renewed resurrection life of the world to come, initiated in Christ. It thus prefigures the intermediate state of those who have died in Christ, and more loosely the 'intermediate state' of every earthly Christian life, and indeed of the whole church age.

7.5 Overall appraisal of JDS teaching

JDS teaching is not simply a 'spiritualisation of Christ's death'. It is a cluster of ideas drawn partly from patristic and early mediaeval sources, and partly from the western protestant Christianity of which Kenyon was heir. In particular, Higher Life and Faith Cure played a part in supplying Kenyon with language and ideas that he wove into his distinct doctrine. In contrast, New Thought and Christian Science played very little part, if any. Beyond all these sources, undoubtedly, Kenyon was a creative thinker, and several aspects of JDS teaching are original to him.

The value of JDS doctrine is limited. It is a useful rejoinder to any docetic tendency to 'sanitise' the cross. It highlights unpalatable aspects of Christ's death, even if in the process it wildly misrepresents them. It broadens study of Christ's suffering beyond the merely physical aspects to consider 'spiritual' ones. It is by no means docetic.

However, JDS teaching is in many ways unhelpful. It creates more difficulties and questions than it even begins to overcome. In particular, with reference to systematic theology, it undermines the traditional forms of trinitarianism, incarnationism and atonement theology that much Pentecostalism holds dear.¹⁸ Although critics of the Word-faith movement express deep concern about the movement's beliefs and practices relating to such matters as physical healing, material prosperity and 'positive confession',¹⁹ it may actually be the movement's view of Christ's death and therefore the atonement about which the wider Christian world should be most cautious. On one level JDS teaching may have less impact on the everyday worship and witness of churches espousing it than do prosperity teaching and aggressive stances towards faith and healing. However, its serious defects cannot be ignored by those who take underlying beliefs as seriously as everyday practices. At this stage in the evolution of the Word-faith movement, it is unclear whether JDS teaching will flourish or wither. It is to be hoped that the latter is the case. The extent to which wider Pentecostalism is tempted to adopt the teaching may well be minimised by this wider movement's increasing appetite for theological education, which is to be welcomed.

As stated in the introduction, the hypothesis that this project set out to test was that JDS doctrine is more congruent with biblical and historic Christian affirmations about the death of Christ than its detractors have suggested. The research concludes that, while this hypothesis is to a limited extent true, nevertheless there is much about JDS teaching which Christians in general, and Pentecostals in particular, do well to

¹⁸ The widespread existence of Oneness Pentecostalism is noted.

¹⁹ E.g. McConnell, *Promise*, chs 8-10; Hanegraaff, *Crisis*, parts 2, 5, 6; Bowman, *Controversy*, chs 7, 14, 15.

reject. As Pentecostalism continues to ponder on the mystery of the cross, it is advised not to understand or express this under the banner, 'Jesus died spiritually'.

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